

White
As
Milk,
Red
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Blood

The FORGOTTEN
FAIRY TALES of
Franz Xaver von Schönwerth

Illustrated by WILLOW DAWSON • Translated by SHELLEY TANAKA

With a foreword by PHILIP PULLMAN



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*For my little nestlings, W+A, whose German blood runs thick.
And for my own mother, who breastfed me a sizable dose of
fairy tales and fear. –W D.*

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Foreword

by Philip Pullman

Until 2012, I had never heard of Franz Xaver von Schönwerth. In that year, like many other admirers of the fairy tale, I was astounded to hear of the discovery of five hundred unknown stories in a German archive, and was at once impatient to read them. And now, here they are—or some of the best of them, illustrated with wonderful freedom and zestful inventiveness by Willow Dawson.

I knew the Grimm brothers' famous collection fairly well, and what I admired about it was the brothers' direct and unmodulated way of telling their tales. The Grimms were working with material from a number of sources, and the best of the stories have the almost unselfconscious immediacy of oral storytelling (although Wilhelm Grimm did enlarge and embroider the tales more and more in later editions). Because I like that way of telling a tale so much, I was a little apprehensive when I first opened this collection, in case von Schönwerth's tales turned out to be something I have less taste for: the so-called literary fairy tale, most examples of which are (to my mind) whimsical, affected, sentimental, with all the tensile strength of a piece of well-boiled spaghetti.



I needn't have worried. These tales of von Schönwerth are ferocious. And funny, and moving, and delightful. Punishments are properly bloody, passions are immediate and volcanic, and most important of all, the style is brisk, vivid, and colourful—and those colours, as the title of this book exemplifies, are primary and full of life. Some of the tales here are familiar from other anthologies, or from our own dimly-remembered childhoods, when all stories seemed to come from our grandparents and other people half as old as time; but they are stories that can always bear telling again, and the voice in these, whether it's von Schönwerth's own or a faithful transcription, is fresh and confident.

What's more, the tales contain some images that are so vivid they are hard to forget, such as the witch removing her own head in order to de-louse it. A useful talent, no doubt, although one that is bound to create a certain unease in anyone watching. I also like the idea of the young man Jodl reluctantly but dutifully getting into bed with a toad, then waking to find the creature turned into a beautiful princess: a nice reversal of the Frog Prince story we know from Grimm.



The fact that these stories seem not to have been intended for publication may account for their unadorned quality. It looks as though von Schönwerth gathered them for his own pleasure. Good for him! There are many collections of folk tales, in all the languages of the world—and no doubt, many that haven't been discovered yet, lying quietly in archives or libraries, or gathering dust in attics. But there's always room for another, especially when it's as crisp and vigorous as this. Franz Xaver von Schönwerth, I salute you!





Outwitting the Witch



Once there was a wicked old witch who carried off three princesses. She kept them captive in her cave, where she taught them all about her black arts. The youngest princess in particular was very clever and made exceptional progress.

One day a prince who had lost his way came to the cave seeking shelter for the night. The old woman received him in a friendly way. But the three princesses, who were heavily veiled, had been instructed to speak neither to him nor with each other.

But the prince soon took in his situation, and he could not help but notice the youngest princess throwing meaningful glances at him. She managed to find a quick moment to tell him the truth, that the witch was actually planning to wait until the prince was in a deep sleep, and then she would kill him.

The witch and the two older sisters went to prepare the prince's quarters for the night. Meanwhile, the youngest sister told him what to do. She said that when he was taken to his bedchamber, he was not just to walk in, but to leap over the threshold.

Furthermore, she said, the old woman would offer him a mug of something to drink, but that he should not drink it because it contained a sleeping potion. Instead, he was to pour the contents of the mug into his boot. The princess would snuff out the light as she was cleaning, almost as if out of clumsiness, so no one would see him do this.

And so that the old woman would suspect nothing, he should immediately pretend to be very sleepy and ask to go to bed. The princess herself would lead the way and lower the lamp when he jumped over the threshold, so that the mean witch would not be aware of what was happening.

Once he was in the room, though, he should not get into bed. Instead, he was to lie underneath the bedstead.

Everything else he should leave to her.

As it was already late, the old woman sent two of the princesses to bed. But the third one, the youngest, she held back. Then the old lady offered the prince a mug of wine.

The princess snuffed out the lamp while the prince poured the sleeping potion into his boot. He then yawned hugely and asked to be taken to his room. The old woman ordered the princess to light his way and to stay with him, because she had already seen that the two of them were getting along rather well together.

So everything unfolded just the way the girl had predicted, and when the old woman herself retired a short time later, the young princess, using the witchcraft she had learned, fled with the prince.

They were many hours away by the time daylight broke. The princess turned around and cried, "We are being followed. We must be on our guard!"

In fact, when the witch woke up and could not find the youngest princess and the prince, she knew immediately what must have happened, and she sent one of the other princesses to fetch the pair and bring them back.

As the danger grew ever closer, the youngest princess said, "I am going to turn myself into a rosebush, and I will change you into a rose so that you won't attract attention as she passes by. My sister hates the smell of roses."

When the princess in pursuit came to the place where she had just seen the pair from afar, they were no longer to be found. The sister stood there and looked all around. And then she turned back.

The old woman asked her whether she had seen the fugitives.

"Yes, I did see them. But when I got to the place where I thought they were, all I could see was a rosebush with a single rose on it."

"Oh, you stupid girl!" raged the old woman. "If only you had plucked that rose blossom and brought it back, the bush would have followed of its own accord."

So she sent the last princess off with the same order.

In the meantime, the two runaways had resumed their true forms and set off again. They were on their way when the princess turned around and caught sight of their pursuer.

She thought quickly and said to the prince, "I am going to turn myself into a

church, and you will climb into the pulpit and give a stern sermon, warning against witches and their evil trickery.” Soon the sister who was hurrying after them came by. She had thought she was close to catching the fugitives, but now all she could see was a church and, inside it, a priest who was loudly preaching against witches and their black arts.

So she turned back, and when the old woman asked her whether she had seen anything, she answered, “Yes, I did see them, but when I got there, a church stood before me, and inside there was a priest railing against the evils of witchcraft.”

“Oh, you foolish thing!” the old woman shouted. “If you had only pushed the preacher out of the pulpit, the church would have followed. I’m going to go after them myself now. They will not escape me.”

The fleeing pair had taken their former shapes and were on their way again when the old woman came after them. Now the princess was truly alarmed, because her skills were likely no match for those of her mistress.

“Quick, give me your sword,” she said to the prince. “I am going to turn myself into a pond, and I shall turn you into a duck. You must stay in the middle of the water, no matter how much she may entice you. If you do not, we are both doomed.”

The old woman tried everything she could think of to lure the duck to shore. She cooed and begged and threw morsels of food into the water to tempt it to come close.

But it was all in vain. The duck remained in the middle of the pond and would not go near her.

So the old woman lay on her belly on the bank and sucked up all the water in the pond. The princess was now inside the body of the witch. She assumed her former shape and sliced open the belly with the sword she had borrowed from the prince, leaving the witch lying there, dead.

And so they were both saved. The princess granted the prince her hand in marriage, and she lived long and happily with him, along with her two sisters, whose enchantment was also broken.



White as Milk, Red as Blood



Three hunters went hunting in a faraway forest. They found themselves in a wilderness without end, where they lived on wild game and slept beneath the trees.

One day they came upon a little house standing in a clearing. The walls and roof were covered with moss, so that the house looked like a matted grey head of hair, all shaggy in the wind. A brushwood fence stood guard around the hut.

Inside, the house was empty, but everything was clean and tidy, and the stove was set with coal.

The hunters were looking for shelter for the night, and this place was cozy and comfortable.

Their eyes were heavy and about to close when they saw sparks leaping in the hearth. A tiny woman scurried here and there heating milk in a small pot no bigger than a thimble.

The hunters settled in, hunted game and made themselves at home. The little maiden stayed away, though sometimes she would sit on the garden fence, singing a mournful song and weaving a crown of twigs for her hair.

The hunters decided that if they could catch this creature, she could be their servant. So they captured the little maid.

But she wept, her hands trembling, and begged, “Catch me not, hold me not, and in return I will bring you your own little sister.”

That made the hunters happy, and after a few days she brought their sister to them. She was a beautiful girl, white as milk, red as blood. But she soon complained to her brothers about a little grey man who would often come to her. He would tease and terrorize her, and force her to suck his little finger.

So the brothers waited in ambush, grabbed the little man, beat him to death

and buried him in the garden.

Soon after, three tall flowers grew on top of the grave. The sister was amazed by their magnificent colours and the sweet scent of their blossoms. But whenever she went to pull down the flowers by their stems, the voice of the forest maiden would call out to her, “Don’t break the flowers!”

One day a beautiful white dog ran to the sister. He would not leave her side, did not even respond to the call of the horns. Eventually he bayed three times, whereupon a hunter appeared. He was slim of stature and his hair was blond, and over his shoulder hung a silver hunting horn.

“What a beautiful maiden!” he cried, and he went to her and took her hand. “Will you be my wife? My castle lies over there beyond the mountains. I will come and fetch you in three days.”

The girl nodded, and the hunter went away.

When her brothers came, they rebuked her and warned her against succumbing to the strange suitor. But she could not forget the man, and she felt sorry that she was so poor and had nothing to adorn herself with as a bride.



On the third day the hunter came back in a magnificent carriage. Even as her brothers came running, their sister hurried into the garden and plucked the flowers, and when their stems snapped, the brothers froze mid-stride and were transformed into deer.

And the voice of the forest maiden whispered to her, “Remain as still and silent as the grave for seven years!”

There she stood, white as snow, cold as ice. But the hunter was still entranced by her, so he took her to his carriage and rode off to his castle.

They lived together, enjoying all the riches of the kingdom. But the hunter’s mother also lived there, and she was a very bitter and angry woman. She couldn’t stand her daughter-in-law, and she pestered and tormented the silent woman, constantly grumbling and snapping at her.

After a time, the wife gave birth to a boy. The old woman strangled him to death. Then she wiped his blood on the lips of the new mother and ran to her son and said, “Come and see for yourself what kind of wife you have. She has just eaten her own child!”

The man quickly entered the bedchamber where his wife lay sleeping. Beside her bed he saw the three flowers, still in full bloom. He shook his head, because the forest maiden had confided in him that as long as they did not wither and fade, the flowers were a symbol of his wife’s innocence and devotion.

Thus she bore him two more sons who, like the first child, also fell victim to the bloodthirsty old woman. But his mother finally learned about the secret of the flowers. She tore them to shreds and bewitched her son into finally believing her and calling for the executioner.

The young woman was led to the execution site. She walked as if she were already dead, though a single word would have saved her.

She was sitting on the stool with her neck bared and the sword glinting above her when a cloud of dust rose up in the distance.

Three riders appeared, riding three stags.

“The seven years are up! Loosen your tongue now, sister, we have come!” called her brothers, their spell now broken as they came to her aid.

So now it happened that the old murderess was the one to be punished at the hands of the executioner, and life in the castle was happy once again.

But every year the mistress of the castle would go to the hut in the forest clearing, so that her children could gather flowers and decorate the little house

with garlands inside and out.

But the hut remained empty and abandoned, and only a single cricket chirped beneath the cookstove.

The Moon and the Maiden

Every night when the young maiden went to bed, the moon would shine through her window and light up her tiny room until it was almost as bright as day. The girl was very beautiful, and the moon was in love with her.

But the girl's sweetheart was a rich farmer's son who did not have honest intentions, and who just wanted to take advantage of her.

One night he took her out to a dance and pressed her to invite him to her bedchamber. In her confusion and excitement, the girl agreed.

So as not to arouse suspicion, she left the dance early and went home. But when she walked into her room, she saw the moon shining into it so beautifully. And when she climbed into her bed, it seemed to come even closer, until it was practically waiting just outside her window, its sad eyes beckoning to her.

The girl's suitor came soon after. But she told him to go away, because the moon was shining in so brightly, right onto her little bed. The boy could come again, she said, when it grew dark.

But each time he returned, the moon would always be there, shining into the chamber, which thoroughly annoyed the lad, and he cursed the moon for preventing him from fulfilling his wicked intentions.

So in the end he married the girl, and after that the moon no longer shone into the room. And the girl was full of heartfelt gratitude to her protector for keeping her chaste, and for making of her an honest woman.



Fishwomen



Near a village there was a large lake where the pretty girls of the area would bathe and frolic, bringing pleasure to all. When the girls returned home from swimming in the water, they were more beautiful than ever, and the more often they bathed, the more lovely they became.

News of this spread to other girls in other villages, and soon they came from far and wide just to bathe in the lake. But these girls were very ugly, and they couldn't stay under the water as long as the village girls. They did not grow more beautiful, and in fact many of them actually drowned. So after a time the foreign girls stopped coming.

Meanwhile, though, men began to arrive in the village. They came from every corner of the land, seeking the hands of the beautiful girls.

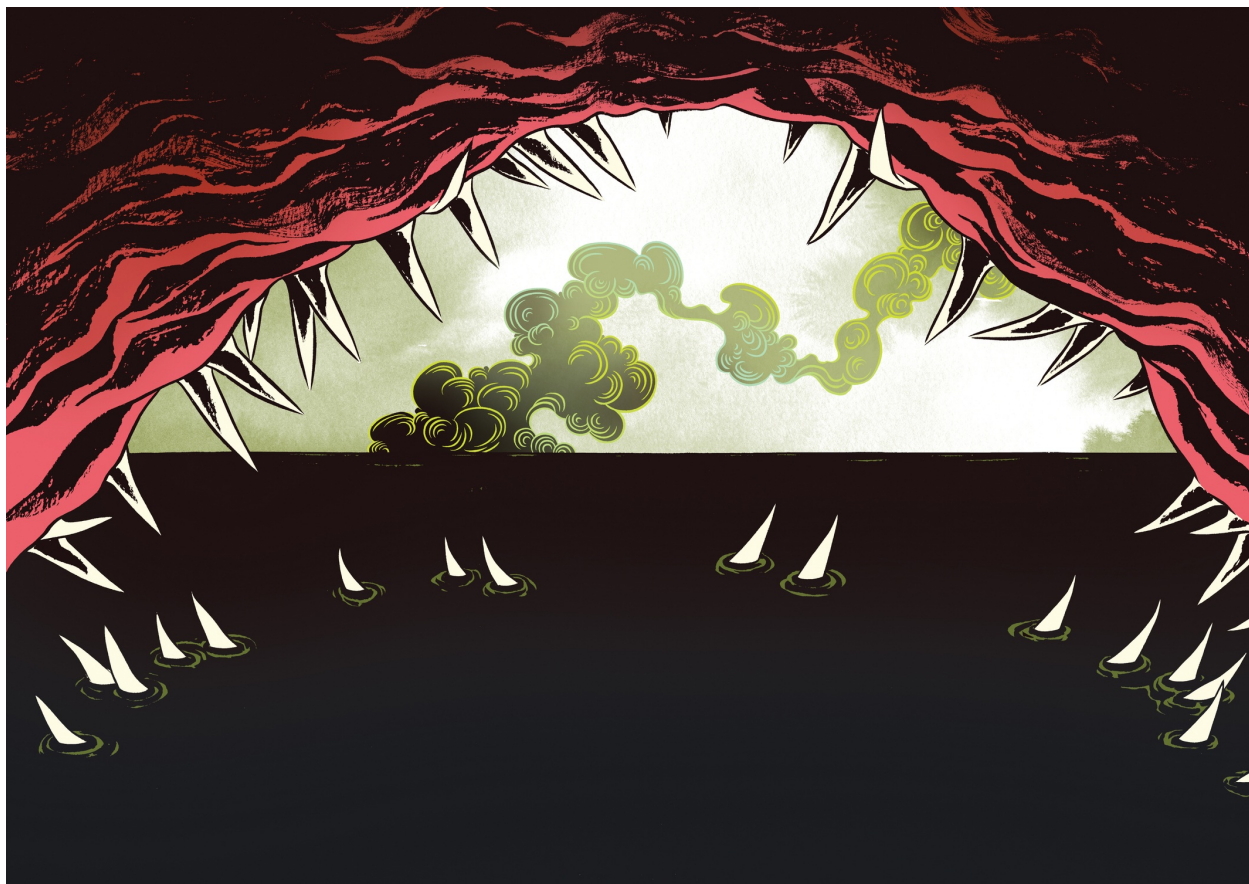
All the girls in the village were married on the same day. Towards dawn on the day after the wedding, the villagers were awoken by horrible sounds. Everyone ran to see what was happening. They saw bridegrooms dragging their brides around by the hair. They saw beating and thrusting that went on as long as the men pleased. And when it was over, the men ran away.



The villagers realized that there was something not quite right about these brides. Indeed, they were found, on inspection, to be covered with scales.

The judge came with his attendants, and he took a look at the brides and ordered a giant pyre to be built, so the fishwomen could be burned alive altogether.

As the flames began to rise, the lake beside the village roused itself. Soon, high waves reared up and poured over the village. The monstrous head of a giant stretched up out of the lake and spewed water like a whale to put out the fire. And on the thick surge of the wave, the brides rose up from the pyre and walked across the bridge of water. They walked right into the mouth of the water giant, as if through an enormous gateway.



Ever since then, the water has been quiet, and girls can no longer be found bathing in this lake.

Drink Up the Devil



In the area of Tiefenbach lived a farmer's wife who had never been able to stand small children. Eventually she gave birth to one, but she despised this child of her own womb.

One day she was working away, even though the child was hungry and kept crying for its mother's milk. But the cruel woman paid it no attention, and instead kept at her task. So the child fretted even more and cried all the harder.

Finally the bad mother took the baby and in a rage she pressed it to her breast, cursing, "So drink up the devil, then!"

Whereupon the child immediately began to laugh, even though it was barely eight days old. And it squeezed its lips so tight that the mother's nipple remained in its mouth. The child grew stronger and stronger, until it could no longer be contained by its own swaddling. It continued to struggle until it became completely mangled and mauled by the blanket wrapped around it so tightly, and on the third day the child died.

They said that the babe had been possessed, and that when the child passed away, a swarm of blackbirds rose up from the body and flew away into the sky.

A year later the woman became pregnant again, but she was not able to bring this baby into the world.

Instead, she died while she was still pregnant, and when they opened up her belly, they discovered that the child inside her was not of human form.



The Flax Sowers

 There were two young maidens—one beautiful and the other ugly. They both sowed flax.

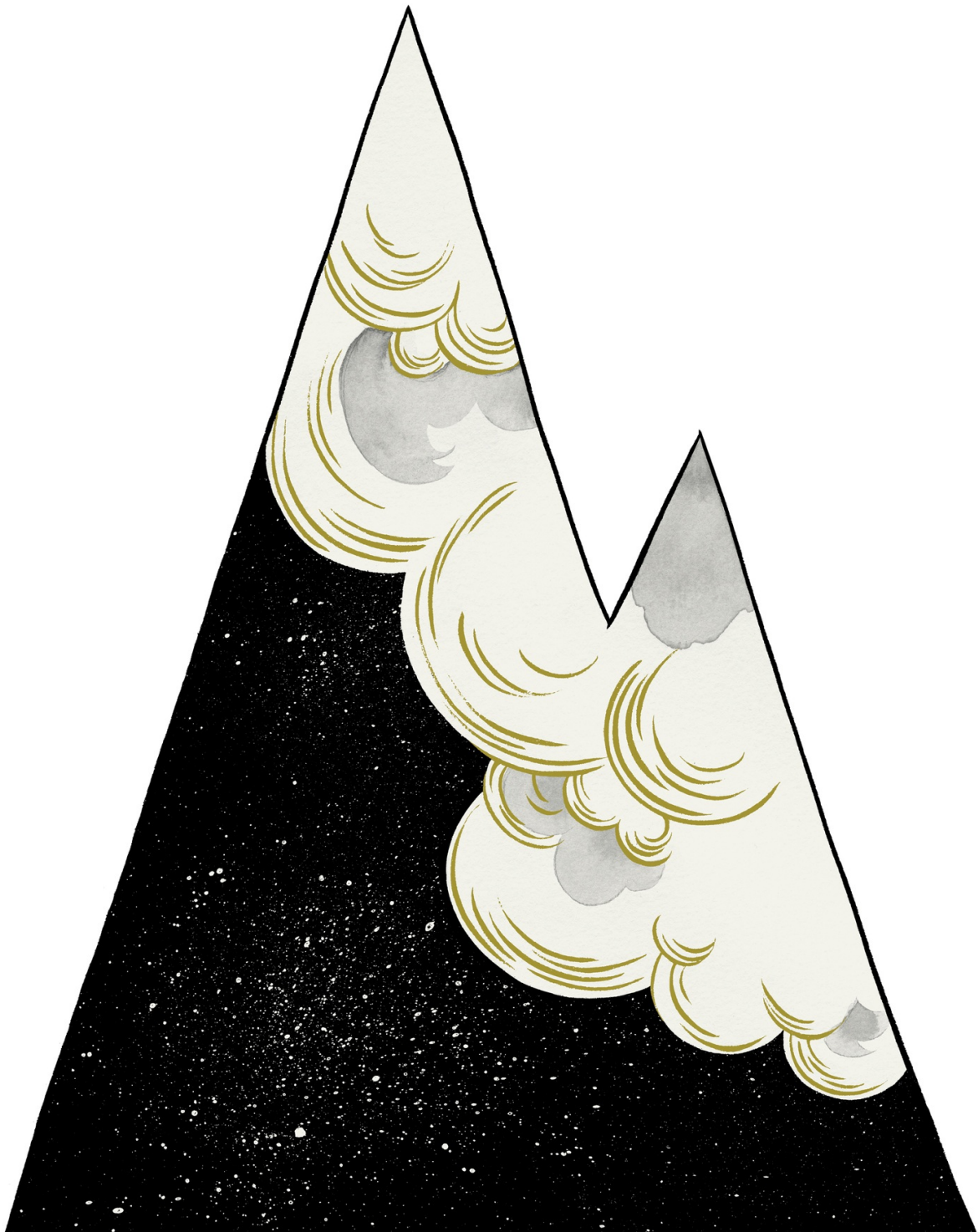
The beautiful girl sowed on the mountain, and she would sing as she walked with her plough and think about the many admirers who pursued her.

The other girl sowed in the valley. Because she was nasty to look at and not desirable, she worked long and hard. And from time to time she would throw a few seeds into the bushes that grew near the edge of the nearby woods, just for the forest maiden.

When the flax had grown lush and tall, the two girls came again to clear the fields of weeds. The beautiful girl thought more about her suitors than about her work, but the ugly girl worked even harder, carefully ripping out every weed. She also made sure to tie together a few flax stalks to build a little house for the forest maiden at the edge of the field.

“Forest girl!” she called into the trees. “Here is your share. Make the flax grow tall and plentiful, so there will be enough for both of us.”







Then she went back home.

And so the flax on the mountain withered away, and the flax in the valley shot up as tall as the sky. Both girls brought in their harvest and spun through the winter, and in the spring they took their linen to the meadow to bleach it.

Lo and behold, the cloth of the beautiful girl was sparse and coarse, and the cloth of the ugly girl was fine and plentiful.

Whereupon the beautiful girl was filled with rage, and she turned on her friend and cried, "I know how you did this. You fly in the night and you're a witch who consorts with those shabby forest creatures. That's why you are so hideous and will never get a husband, you decrepit old stick-ugly spinster."

At that moment, along the forest road came a handsome prince travelling in a golden carriage pulled by four white horses. Behind him sat a Moor.

The prince stopped by the meadow and stepped down from the carriage. He took the beautiful girl by the hand and asked, "I want to marry you, but is your linen fine?"

The girl said nothing, but from the forest a voice cried, "No!"

The prince let go of her hand and went to the ugly girl and took her by the hand and asked, "I want to win your hand. Is this your linen here?"

She blushed and said nothing, and from the woods came the answer, "Yes!"

Then he took her in his arms and kissed her as his bride, and as the breath from his mouth entered her, she became as beautiful as an angel and stood there clothed in the most luxurious garments.

When the beautiful maiden saw this, she was poisoned by her own envy and grew so ugly that the Moor, who now saw her as his equal, rushed up to her and offered her his hand, which she shoved aside in anger.

The prince rode away with his happy bride, while the beautiful girl, now turned hideous and miserable in her jealousy, turned to walk back to the village.

And ever since then, girls do not sing while they are sowing flax. Neither do they forget to gather up a few remaining stalks to build a little house of flax for the forest maiden.

Ashfeathers



A man's wife died. So he remarried and had two children with his new wife. But he also had a daughter from his first marriage, and her stepmother and stepsisters hated her to death. They made her live in the kitchen, where she was always covered with ashes. Soon she was barely recognizable, and the stepmother began to call her Ashfeathers.

Every Sunday, the two stepsisters dressed up in fine clothes to go to church, while Ashfeathers stayed behind in the kitchen.

One Sunday she asked her stepmother whether she too might be allowed to go to church. Whereupon the evil woman tossed a basketful of millet seed on the floor and covered the seeds with ashes. She ordered the girl to pick each grain out of the ash. If she collected every single seed, then she might go to church.

And so it went every Sunday, and poor Ashfeathers could never manage to pick out all the millet, and so she never went to church.

One day when she was weeping over the cruelty of her stepmother and her own harsh fate, two turtle doves came and began to pick out the grains of millet to eat them.

"Dear doves," cried the girl. "Not in your crop, in my crock!"

So the doves got busy and carefully dropped each seed in the pot, and when all the millet had been collected, Ashfeathers went to her stepmother and asked if she could now go to church, as she had completed her task.

The stepmother did not allow her to go that day. Instead, she promised she

could attend the following Sunday, if she could complete her task just as quickly.

But the next Sunday was the day of the fair in a nearby town. The father would go every year and would always bring back something for the two sisters without a thought for Ashfeathers. This time she asked him to bring her something too.

When he asked what she would like, she said, “Oh, just bring me whatever happens to brush against the tip of your hat.”

As it happened, as the father was walking along the footpath, he stumbled into a hazelnut bush, catching a bough on the tip of his hat. Which made him think of his daughter, and so he took the branch with him.

For the other girls he brought back beautiful clothes. Still, Ashfeathers was absolutely delighted with her little bouquet of nuts, and when her father asked her to fetch water from a nearby well, she tucked the branch close to her breast and set off.

But as she leaned over the well, the precious branch fell into the water. She tried to fetch it out, but the well was too deep, and she began to weep bitterly.

Then she heard a soothing voice coming out of the well. It told her to come back the following Sunday and to chant the following rhyme:



*Dear branch of mine
That gleams with grace,
Give me a gown
Worthy of a holy place.*

The next Sunday, when Ashfeathers set to work to pick out the grains of millet once again, she called to the doves:

*Darling doves,
Help me, please,
Fill my crock
Chock full of seeds!*

And the doves came to her aid and worked so diligently that she was finished very early and was able to go back to the well. She washed herself there until she gleamed like pure gold, and then she called out:

*Dear branch of mine
That gleams with grace,
Give me a gown
Worthy of a holy place.*

Whereupon she found herself dressed from head to toe in the most magnificent clothes, including slippers made of gold. And so she made her way to church.

In the church was a young count from a neighbouring castle. He was astonished by the girl's beauty, and from then on had eyes and ears only for her. He was immensely curious to learn who she was, and after the service he sent one of his servants to follow her.

But Ashfeathers had hurried back to the well, where she put on her old clothes all soiled with dirt and ashes, so that her sisters would not see her fine garments. And the servant eventually returned to his master unable to bring him any news about the beautiful maiden.

The next Sunday, Ashfeathers went back to the well and received clothes that were even more lovely than the first time, and now when she walked into the church everyone looked at her in wonderment, amazed at her beauty and her splendid garments. The count, who had been waiting for some time, fell desperately in love with her and burned with curiosity to know who she was, because he had never seen such a beautiful, and wealthy, maiden in this area before.

He sent his servant to follow her after the service, and this time the count's little dog went along with him.

Meanwhile, Ashfeathers had once again hurried away from the church to change her clothes and get back home as quickly as possible.

The servant was soon frustrated and ready to turn back, but the little dog picked up Ashfeathers's trail, and eventually he came to the well and began to bark. The servant went after him and, thinking the dog was thirsty, fetched water out of the well for the dog to drink.

When the count received no news, he became even more anxious and could think only about how he might find the beautiful maiden.

So the next Sunday, before the church service ended, he spread tree gum in front of the church door, because he knew that the girl was always the first to leave.

This time Ashfeathers was more beautiful than ever, and the count was almost insane with love for her. Once again she was the first to leave. But this time, as she was leaving, she stepped in the sticky tree gum, and in her haste to get home before her sisters, she left one of her tiny golden slippers behind.

The servant, who was right behind her, picked up the little slipper and took it to his master.

The count let it be known that the next day he would go to every house where young women lived, and whoever the golden slipper belonged to would become his wife.

And indeed, he visited one house after another and every girl tried on the slipper, but it was always too small.

Finally, he came to the house where Ashfeathers lived.

“Do any young women live here?” he asked.

“Yes, indeed,” said the stepmother. “I have two daughters.”

The count gave the slipper to the elder sister to try on. She went with her mother into an adjoining room, but when she tried on the slipper, she discovered that her heel was sticking out. Whereupon her mother grabbed a pair of shears and cut off her heel and placed healing salve on her foot so it would not bleed.

Now the slipper fit, and the count, thrilled that he had found the love of his life, took the girl back to his castle in his carriage.

But the little dog who had drunk the well water ran alongside and cried, “Kniff, knoff, my master has a wife with no heel. Kniff, knoff!”

Which is when the count took a closer look at his bride and discovered that in fact her foot had no heel.

So he took her back to her mother and asked whether she had any other daughters.

The mother now brought him her younger daughter. But this girl had such fat toes that she could not get her foot in the little slipper. So the mother grabbed her shears, cut off the girl’s toes, put salve on the wound, shoved the foot into the slipper and led the girl back to the count, who immediately took her to his castle.

And again the little dog ran beside the carriage and cried out repeatedly, “Kniff, knoff, now my master has a wife with no toes. Kniff, knoff, my master has a wife with no toes!”

At which point the count had her examined and found that, indeed, her foot had no toes.

So he took this daughter back to the mother and asked again whether she had any other daughters.

“No,” said the mother.

“But, we do,” said the father.

“Well,” said the mother, “if you mean that stupid, clumsy good-for-nothing.”

But the count insisted, and the father went into the kitchen and told Ashfeathers that the count wanted to see her. So she ran to the spring and chanted, and she received the most beautiful dress that anyone had ever seen.

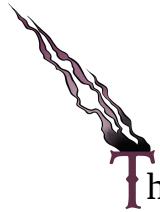
She went back to the house and the count showed her the golden slipper. She knew immediately that it was hers, and she put it on and it fit.

He took her joyfully to his carriage, and this time the little dog ran alongside and said, “Kniff, knoff, my master has the right wife. Kniff, knoff, my master has the right wife!”

A magnificent wedding was held, and Ashfeathers’s father was invited to attend.

The stepmother and her two daughters, however, remained at home, consumed by envy. And so they hanged themselves.

The Weasel



The weasel was as white as snow, and it ran through the meadow so fast and nimble. Behind it came boys and their dogs, and they chased the weasel until it was weak and tired, and the dogs were about to set upon it.

A young girl was watching nearby, and she took pity on the poor creature. She drove the mean boys away and gathered the weasel tenderly into her lap. She had nothing to give the exhausted animal but an egg, but he licked it up greedily. And when he was finished, he slipped away, revived and well.

He left behind the shell, which was now as heavy as the egg itself. It gleamed like silver. And in fact, that's exactly what it was.

The girl owned only one hen, which laid just a single egg at a time. But now the hen laid two eggs every day. So each morning the girl would take one to the meadow where the weasel lived and tuck it under a rock. The next day the egg was empty, but that shell too had turned to silver.

The girl became very rich. Suitors flocked to her to seek her hand. But it was these same rough peasant boys who had hounded the weasel to the brink of death, and so she refused them all.

One Easter, the holy day, the girl brought a sacred egg to the meadow. And this time the weasel came to her and bit into the egg while she still held it in her hand.

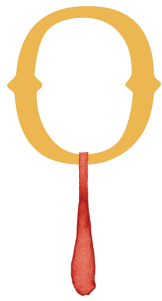
Instantly the egg burst open, and a fire began to blaze. It grew until it was as big as a king's palace, and the girl was overcome and fell back in a swoon.

When she woke up, she found that she was in a beautiful castle, and lying in the arms of a handsome young prince. The prince had been bewitched and changed into a weasel, but she had released him from the spell with the sacred egg.

And not long after that, she became his wife.



The Gardener's Son



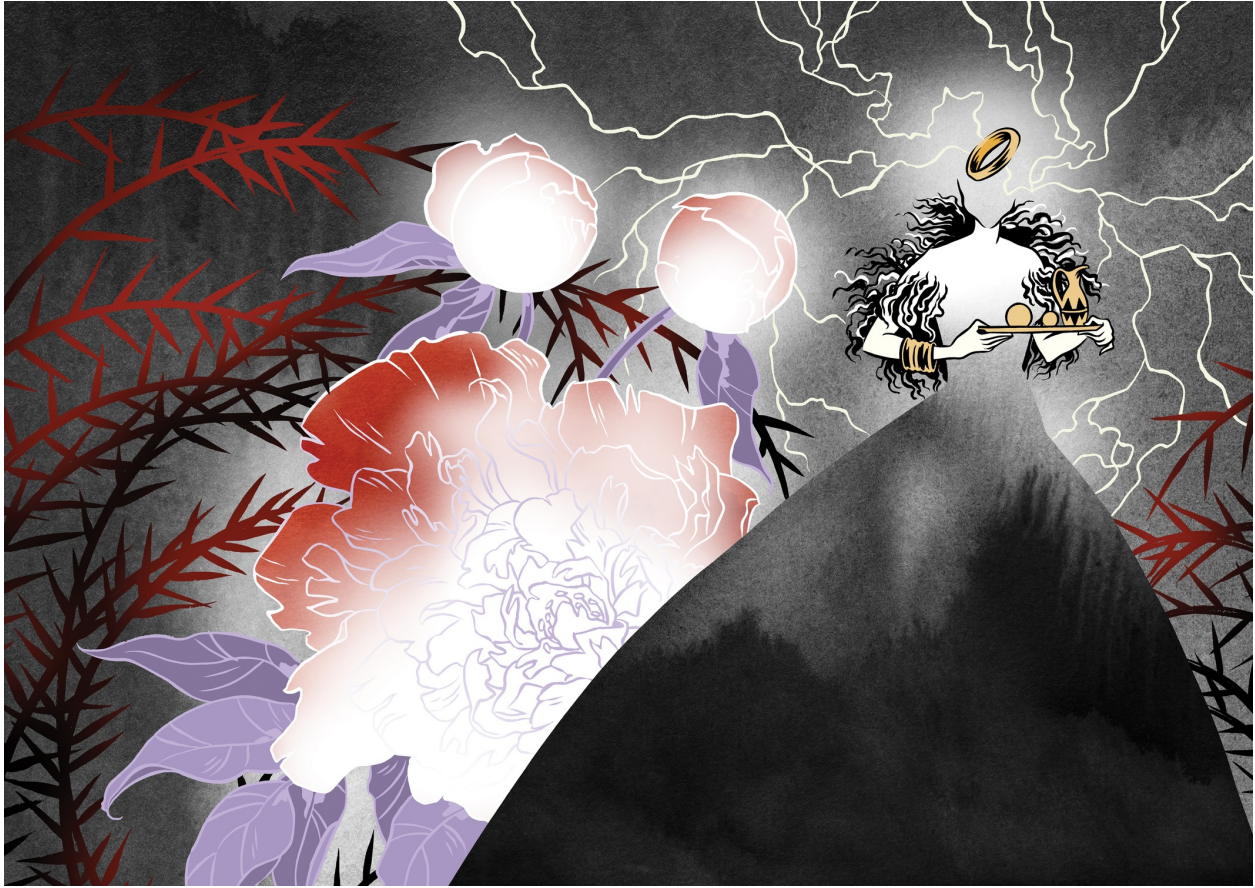
nce there was a gardener who worked for a king. The gardener had a son who was a lazy good-for-nothing.

Finally his father said to him, “Go on, get away from here. Maybe the world can raise you to be a better man.”

So the son set off into the wide world, and towards evening he came to a wild wood. In the dense forest he noticed an old castle. He was overjoyed to see it, because he was very hungry. He walked in and made his way through many rooms, but he saw no one, heard no one.

Tired and weak, he sat down in one of the rooms, whereupon a female figure appeared, clothed all in black. She set food and drink on the table, pointed to a bed and silently left the room.

At midnight, however, when he was already lying in bed, an evil man in black came in and grabbed him around the neck and choked and tormented him for one hour.



In the morning, the same woman came to him. She was clothed in grey this time and she again brought him food and drink for the entire day, again without saying a word.

But on the second night, two men appeared, and they tortured him even more than the first.

After that, the gardener's son no longer wanted to stay in the castle. In the morning he was packing up his belongings when the woman, now dressed in white, came to him, saying that if he would stay only one more night, he would not be harmed.

But at midnight, he was set upon again and tormented even worse than before. This time it was three men who flung him about and beat him viciously, over and over, until the hour had passed. As thunder and lightning raged, the radiant woman in white cast them out.

She was an enchanted princess who was now released from her spell. In her gratitude she gave herself to the gardener's son as his wife. She dressed him in rich garments and gave him many servants and countless treasures.

But even now in his happiness he would sometimes still remember his poor father, and he asked the princess to let him go for a time. She was not at all against this and gave him a ring that he could turn if he was in trouble, and she would come to help him. But she warned him not to call for her from a faraway land.

So the gardener's son, now a prince, went back to his homeland along with a huge retinue and presented himself to the king, who was happy to receive such a guest. He immediately arranged to hold a grand ball in his honour, and all the noblemen of the land were invited.

The prince went into the garden, where he found his father still hard at work. He asked the gardener about his situation and his children. The old man wept as he described his wayward son and how he had not heard from him. His son gave him money so he would have what he needed, and he turned back to the castle in a thoughtful mood.

The day of the feast arrived. The knights came with their wives, and everyone danced. All except for the gardener's son, because he had no wife by his side, and the knights were jealous because he was so handsome, and they would not let their wives dance with him.

So he grew angry and he taunted the knights, saying that none of their wives could begin to match his own in beauty, and when his claim was met with doubtful scorn, he turned his ring and promised to bring the proof to them within the hour.

Sure enough, the carriages arrived, and the gardener's son, or rather the prince, led his wife by the arm into the ballroom. Although she seemed to be in somewhat of a bad mood, she impressed everyone with her radiant beauty.

When the party was over and everything was quiet, it became apparent that the princess was indeed vexed and would not be appeased. And in the morning when the prince woke up, he found himself alone, and his old clothes lay on the bed. Under the bed was a pair of iron shoes, and beside them a note: *As punishment I am leaving you. Do not look for me, for you will not find me, even if you walk until you wear out these iron shoes.*

He turned his ring then, but to no avail. Confused and disgraced, he hurried out of the town and looked everywhere for traces of her, but with no success. He could no longer even find the castle where he had lived so happily.

During his travels, he came to a mountain and found three people arguing. They could not agree on how to share three items. Granted, they were three very

precious items, and the choice between them was difficult. There was a purse that was always filled with gold, a pair of boots that took their wearer a hundred miles with each step, and a cloak that granted invisibility to anyone who wore it.

The gardener's son offered to settle the argument, but he first wanted to test the items to see whether they were genuine. So he took the purse and shook it out again and again, and each time it immediately filled up with gold. He pulled on the cloak and could no longer be seen. Then he quickly slipped on the boots and fled with the purse.

As he ran, he saw a little man running beside him. It was the wind, who had to reach the next town within the hour in order to dry the clothes of the princess, who was to be married that very day.

So the gardener's son said to him, "Wait, and we'll travel together." But the wind lagged far behind. The son handed him a long rope and had him grab firmly onto the end, so they would not be separated.

And as soon as the wind arrived in the town, he went straight to the wash lines and blew the clothes dry.

Meanwhile, the gardener's son, although poorly dressed, went into the first inn he came to and sat down at the first table. The innkeeper barely noticed him until he threw a handful of gold at him. After that, his every wish was fulfilled.



From the gossip around him he realized that the princess who was being married that morning was none other than his wife.

So he put on his cloak and stood behind the altar during the marriage ceremony. He knocked the bible out of the priest's hands, and each time the bridegroom tried to say his vows, he dealt him such a rough blow to the mouth that it echoed throughout the chapel. So the ceremony could not be completed.

Nonetheless, everyone went on to the banquet. The gardener's son stood among the beggars, and whenever the servers went by with food and drink, he

would take it from them unseen and divide it among his neighbours.

At one point his ring fell to the ground and a servant noticed it, picked it up and took it to the princess, because her initials were engraved on the inside.

The princess immediately had the gardener's son brought before her, and the beggars erupted in joy that one in their midst had been selected for such a high honour.

He showed her his iron shoes then. And though they were not worn through, husband and wife made up with each other, and went on to celebrate their marriage in true fashion.

The Bad Mother



Even as she prepared for her wedding day, the shameless woman had already given birth to three children out of wedlock. She tossed one of them in the water to drown. Another she buried in a dungheap. And the third she hid in the forest under a pile of sticks.

On the day she was to be married, a shepherd was wandering through the forest when he heard a child crying.

“I can hear you,” the shepherd called out. “But I can’t see you. Or your mother either.”

And the child answered, “It was my mother who laid me here and covered me with fir needles. She is getting married today, and she will be wearing a green garland. She has already killed two of her own children. Have pity and pick me up. Carry me to the inn and put me on the table there.”

So the shepherd picked up the babe, carried it into the room in the inn where the wedding feast was held and placed it naked on the table.



The child began to speak again.

“God bless you all, dear wedding guests. Know that this bride is my mother. She is the one who threw my little brother in the water and buried my little sister in a pile of dung. Hear the piper praise this bridal queen. Her wreath should be made of nails, not green.”

And the treacherous woman swore, “If I am that mother, may the devil take me!”

Whereupon the devil came and tore her to shreds before their very eyes.

The Bloody Paw



Many young men were searching for work, and so they often came to the miller's house to seek employment.

But it seemed that although many were seen going into the house, none could be seen coming back out, and gradually word spread that the miller's wife was actually a witch.

One day a new lad came round looking for work. But this one had been forewarned. So that night, before he went to bed in the loft, he lit a holy candle and put it on the table beside his bed. Above his head he placed a sword.

When the witching hour struck, three cats jumped onto the table. One was black, one grey and one white.



“Put out the light!” said one.

But because the candle was holy, none of them could douse the flame. The white cat crouched as if she would leap on the candle to smother it, but the young man grabbed his sword and chopped off her paw, whereupon all three cats fled out the window.

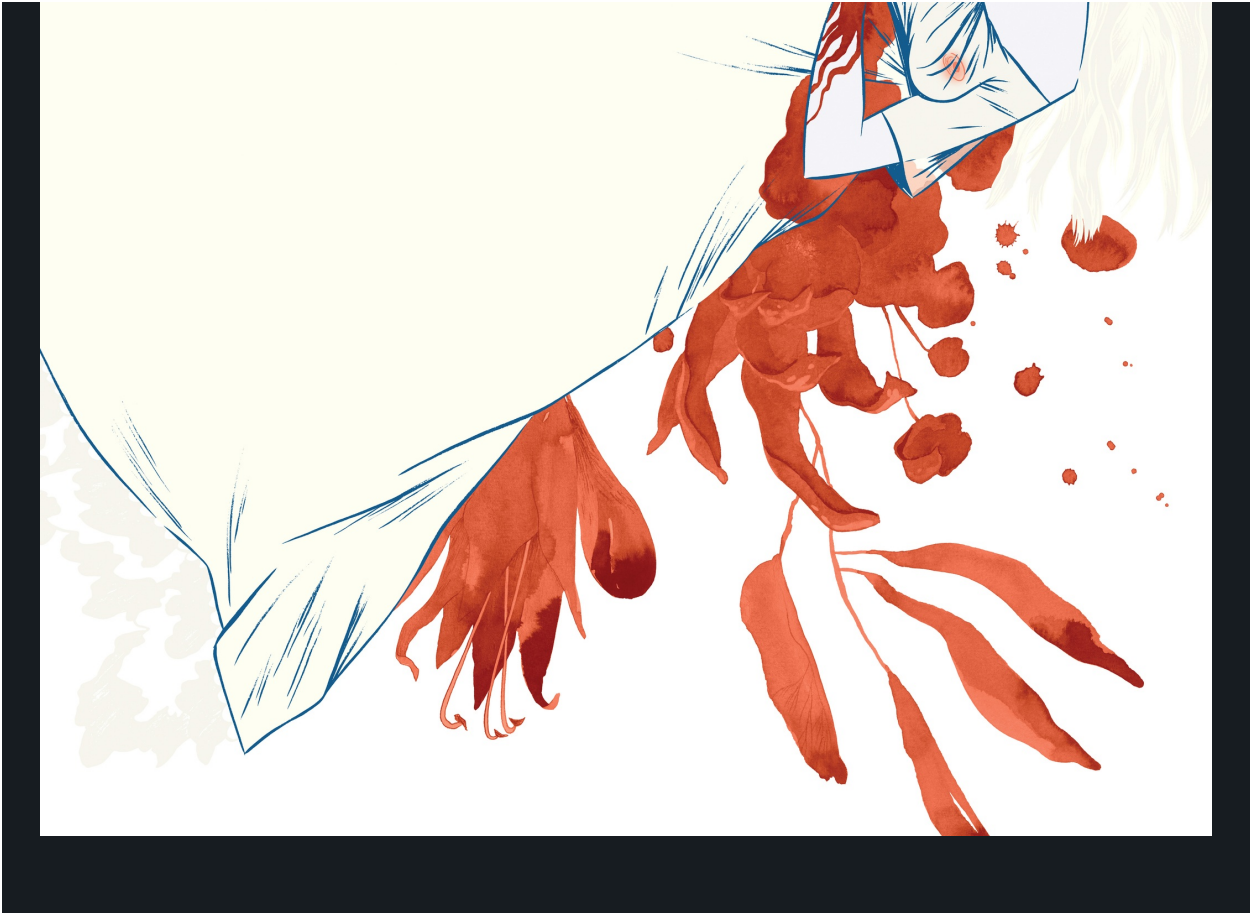
The next morning the young man went downstairs, where the miller was very happy to see him, and said he would fetch his wife to make them a meal.

But he returned just a short time later.

“I don’t know what is the matter with my wife. She is still in bed, and when I speak to her, she just lies there and won’t answer me.”

“I can well believe it,” replied the young man. “Go on back up. And this time, look underneath the bedding.”

So that’s what the miller did. And he discovered that his wife had only one hand, and the bed was full of blood.



The Hawk and the Dragon



There was a fisherman who worked in the service of a count. He was held in high esteem, because he always brought in large hauls of delicious fish.

Without warning, though, his skills suddenly seemed to fail him, and he fell out of favour and was dismissed. He lived for a time on what he had saved, until that, too, was gone.

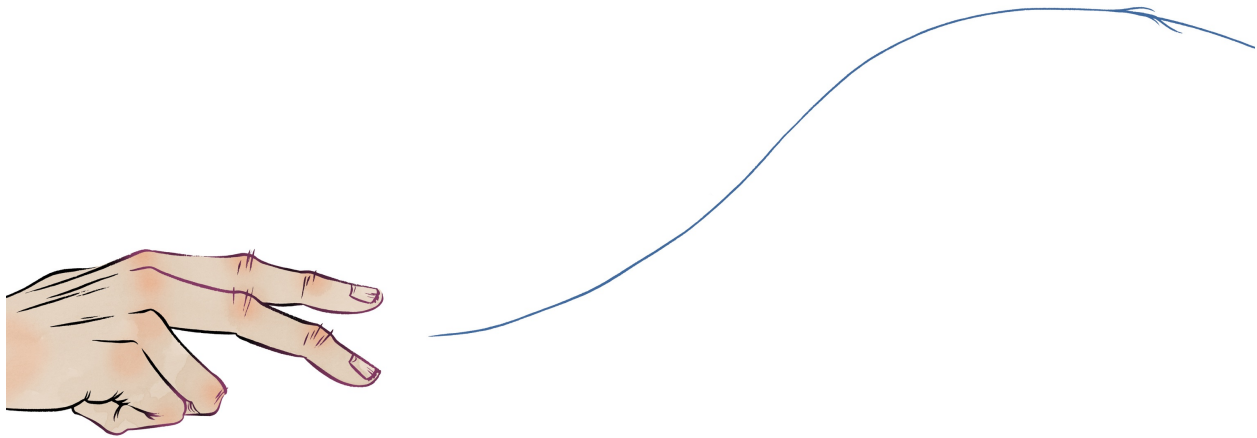
So he returned to the water to try his luck again, and when he caught nothing, he sat in his small boat and wept bitterly.

At that moment a maiden broke through the surface of the water and asked him why he was so unhappy. She then told him that she was the one who had once guided the fish into his nets, and that she had also chased them away. She agreed to help him again, but only if he would promise to give her something that he had at home but that he knew nothing about.

So he promised, and pulled up a huge catch and took it home.

When he told his wife the price of his good fortune, it was her turn to weep. She was pregnant, and had not yet told him.

But they comforted themselves with the thought that they would dedicate the child to God, and so the fisherman continued to fish.



And as before, he brought in the very best fish and took them to the count, who looked on him with favour once again.

In time, a son was born to the couple, and he thrived in body and spirit and seemed to be headed for a life in the Church. But when he was ready to serve, he was unable to conduct his first Mass, because he did indeed belong to the water maiden. So he gave up his calling and left to seek his fortune elsewhere.

During his travels, he came across a group of animals—a bear, a fox, a hawk and an ant. They were standing over the carcass of a horse and did not know how to divide it up. They asked the man to decide for them. And so he did. He threw the forequarters of the animal to the bear, so he would be satisfied first. To the fox he threw the backbone, to the hawk the innards and to the ant the head.

Then he continued on his way.

But the bear thought it would be too unfair to let the man leave without any thanks, and he ordered the fox to call him back. When he returned, the animals gave him the power to assume each of their shapes, but the fellow just laughed and went on his way again.

As he walked, he noticed a flock of partridges in a cornfield. To put his gift to the test, he wished he might turn into a fox, and immediately he did so and set upon the partridges until he had enough. These he took to the next town, where he used them to get himself a meal at the inn.

Meanwhile, four men came into the inn and sat down at a table. They began to play cards and grew quite rowdy, as they were playing for high stakes.

The fellow lay down in the straw behind the oven and saw that one of the players already had a big pile of coins sitting in front of him. So he turned himself into an ant and crawled under the gaming table, where he then transformed himself into a bear. He rose up and overturned the table along with

all the silver coins, which terrified the men, who quickly ran off. He gathered up the coins and lay down in the straw again and slept, and in the morning he settled his bill and went on his way.

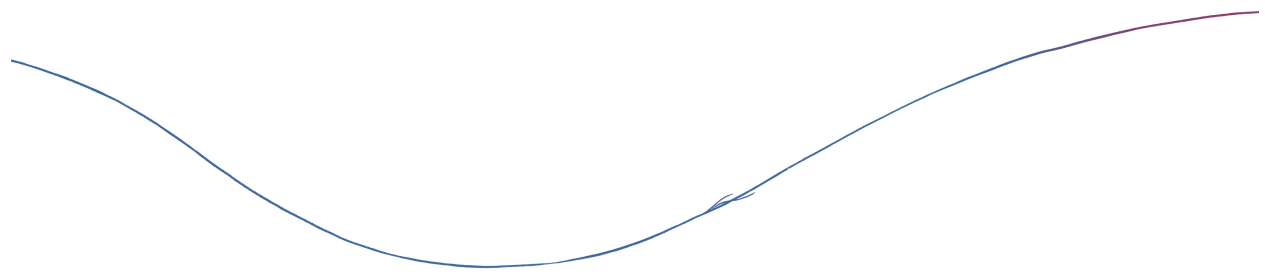
Shortly after this, he arrived in a big city. Everything was draped in black, and from the tower flew a black flag emblazoned with the skull of death. The man went to the inn and asked what was going on. He learned that the king had three fetching daughters, all equally beautiful, and so like each other that one could not tell them apart. But the king had proclaimed that only the middle princess would inherit the kingdom, and anyone who wanted to win her hand would have to choose the correct daughter. Whoever guessed wrongly and did not pass the test would be put to the sword.

Already a goodly number had been killed, and that's why there was such mourning in the land.

So the young man went to the king's castle and saw that there was a moat around the garden where the king's daughters were strolling. He transformed himself into a noble young hawk and flew over the water.

He lured the girls from one bush to the next, until finally he let one of them catch him. He perched on her hand, and she carried him into her chamber and set him on a rod made of gold.

While she slept, he took his former shape, now clothed in fine garments.



He took the princess's hand to wake her and told her that he was the bird and that he was in love with her.

Upon hearing his words, she was at first frightened to death at the appearance of the strange man, but soon she found that she rather liked him, and she revealed that she was indeed the middle princess. She gave him her ring and told him that she would instead wear a red silk thread on the middle finger of her right hand, so he would recognize her when it came time to choose.

Then she opened the window, and the hawk flew off.

In the morning, the stranger came before the king to win the hand of the middle daughter. The king and his court were dismayed to hear this, because he was so handsome, and they tried to persuade him to abandon the dangerous undertaking. But he persisted and was called into the hall where the three daughters were standing. Behind him the executioner took his position, his sword unsheathed and gleaming.

The young man trembled with fright then, and they were more than willing to accommodate him when he asked for the window to be opened.

Then he stood before the identical sisters.

One of them moved slightly forward. She wore the red thread on her finger, and he correctly identified her as the middle daughter.

The palace and the city erupted in great joy, because the king had long rued his proclamation and all the bloodshed it had caused, and he was happy to give his daughter to the lucky suitor.

And so many years went by, and they lived happily together.

Until the day he went out hunting. His worried wife tried to dissuade him, because she was filled with dark foreboding, but he paid no attention. The day was hot, he had been following a stag for a long time, and he was thirsty. He no longer thought of the words of his mother, who had so often warned him to be on his guard around water. He hurried ahead of his retinue and found a spring. He was bending forward to scoop up a handful of water when the water maiden grabbed him and pulled him under. And as the others approached, she shouted that she had paid dearly for him.

They took the sad tale back to the king's daughter, who would have neither rest nor peace. She hurried to the spring and sat on the bank and wept for her husband and master. Whereupon the water maiden emerged to console her, saying he would be well looked after.

The princess said she would indeed be satisfied if only she could see her husband, and in exchange she offered the golden comb from her hair. So the water maiden pulled him up until just his eyes were visible.

After that the princess offered her ring, and he rose up until the water came just to his hips. And finally she offered the water maiden the golden slipper from her foot. The water maiden led the man to his wife's hand. And lo and behold, he turned into a hawk and stood there with the princess.

The water maiden disappeared down into the water then, making it spray and

hiss. She appeared again and threw a handful of blue sand into the princess's face, turning her into a dragon.

Now there was great misery in the city once more. The king offered half of his kingdom to anyone who could help.

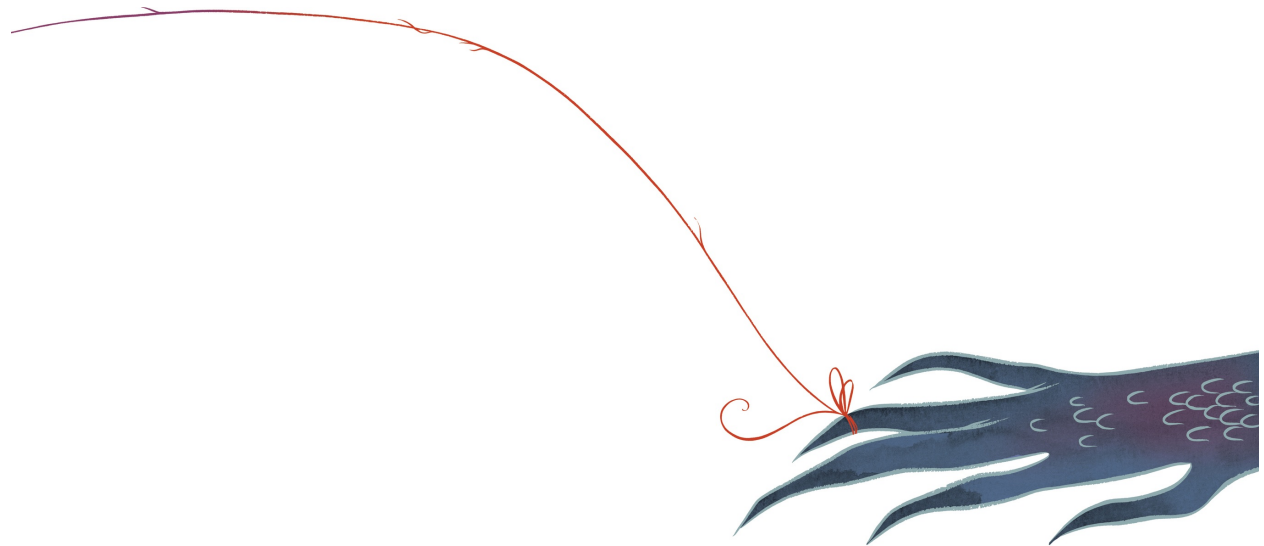
Finally, an old sorcerer came forward. He agreed to help—if the noble lady could bear it. He ordered three ovens to be built and heated, so that each one burned hotter than the last.

He stuck the dragon into the first oven. When her skin was soft, he pulled her out and cooled her in water.

In the second oven her skin burst. And when he put the dragon in the third oven, the unhappy husband had to hide away so that he could not hear the screams and wailing of her suffering.

At last the king's daughter stood naked in front of her husband, who wrapped her in his cloak and led her home in triumph.

And from that day forward they lived happily and without any further difficulties, because the water maiden no longer had a hold on him.



The Golden Slipper



There was a woodcutter who had three daughters. One day he went into the woods, where he tripped over a rotten tree stump. Whereupon a dwarf sprang out and said to him, “You are poor and you don’t have enough to eat. If your oldest daughter kisses me, you will receive a good meal.”

The father invited the dwarf back to his house that evening. But the dwarf appeared to the daughter as a bucket of fire, and the girl shrank back and could not be persuaded to kiss him.

But the dwarf had already prepared a rich meal for the father. And he said that the woodcutter would have another meal just as fine the next day, if the middle daughter would kiss him.

But the second evening, things happened as they did the first night.

On the third evening, the dwarf came again to get a kiss from the youngest daughter. And she did kiss him, and with her kiss she turned him into a real human being. As reward he gave her a folding spinning wheel and spindle, all made of gold. And he promised her that he would come to her in a year and a day to ask her to be his wife. And then he left.

When he did not return, the girl gathered up her gifts and went on her way to search for him.

On her journey she asked the moon, who could see into every corner, to tell her where her beloved was. The moon sent her to the sun, who gave her one of his golden slippers so that they could stay in step with one another, and they carried on together.

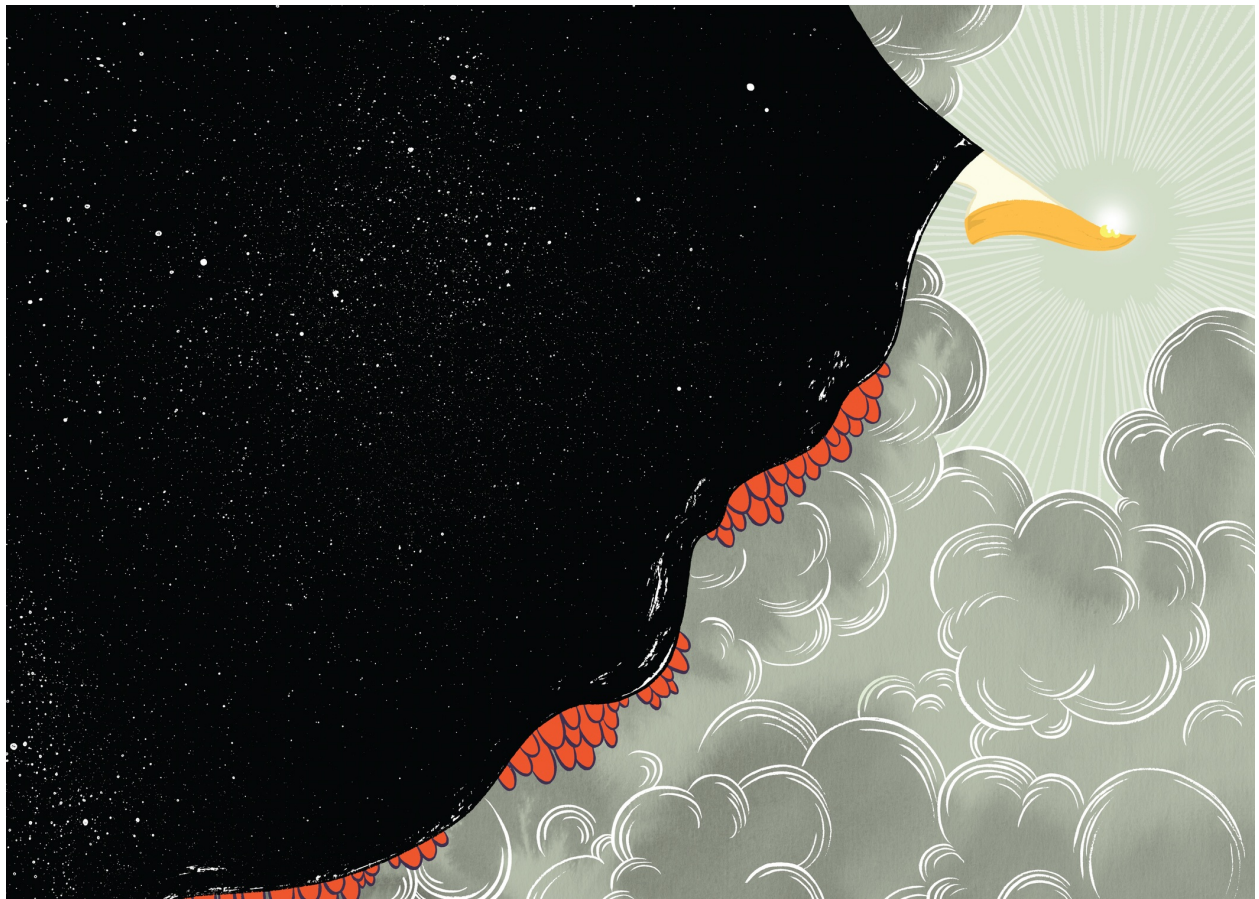
At last the girl came to a mountain where her beloved lived, and she gave her

slipper back to the sun.

The girl then went into the mountain, where she met the cook, who was carrying wood in at that moment. The girl offered her services as a kitchen maid, and soon she too was bringing in wood for the master.

Eventually she offered the cook all her golden things, if only she would be allowed to sleep with the master for one hour. And so she revealed to him that she was in fact his betrothed, and he stood before her once again as a handsome man, for she had released him from enchantment for a second time.

The marriage would not be put off any longer. The old witch of a cook was happy to keep the gifts. And the mountain was transformed into a beautiful castle.



The Three Giants



Three young hunters accompanied their mother to the funeral of their father, who had vowed to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—a promise he could no longer keep. The family agreed to make the journey in his place, and they set off with ample supplies.

They came to a deep dark forest. Night was falling, so they made camp, lit a fire, shot a deer and roasted it on a spit. After they had eaten, they made a leafy shelter and retired for the night, deciding that each of the sons would take turns keeping watch, since they felt uneasy in the woods.

The oldest sat and tended the fire. Along came a bear, who reared up and was about to attack the sleeping family when the brother on watch pulled out his knife and swung and cut off the bear's paw.



As the growling bear fled, the hunter picked up the paw, dried it over the fire and shoved it into his bag.

When it was time for the second brother to keep watch, along came a wolf, who met the same fate as the bear.

By now it was dark, and the youngest took his turn to keep watch. He looked around and climbed up into a large fir tree. From there he saw a tall fire burning brightly not far away. He took his rifle and aimed it at the fire, where three giants were enjoying a meal of venison.

Just as one of them raised a roasted joint to eat it—*whoosh*—it flew away from his mouth. Another giant lifted a mug to take a drink and—*bang*—it too flew out of his hand.

At which point the third giant said, “Someone must be shooting at us. Let’s find him!”

And so they went and found the cocky hunter.

“You’re the shooter?” they shouted to him.

“Indeed I am, and a good one, too!” answered the lad.

“Listen,” said the giants. “We could use your services.”

“That could suit me fine,” said the hunter. “Tell me more.”

“Not far from here there is an old stronghold of a stone castle, and a princess lives inside. She has been enchanted, along with her treasure and her followers, servants and horses. They are all fast asleep, but no one can get near the castle, for as soon as anyone approaches the battlements, a small black rooster appears, and it cackles and squawks and flaps about like the wind, so that the entire castle wakes up. We can’t reach the little beast with our stones, but should you be able to hit it with your bullet, you won’t regret it, if you can only get us into the castle.”

“So you want to release the princess?” said the hunter.

The giants nodded and muttered, “From her gold, at least.”

They set off and soon came to the castle. Out came the little rooster, tiny as a mouse and nimble as a weasel. It appeared on the wall and crowed. But only once, because the hunter shot it. And when he went to pick it up, out of its mouth fell a key, which opened the gate of the castle.

“Let me go in first,” said the hunter, and he crept inside, where he saw a large sword hanging on the wall beside him.



When the first giant followed him in, the hunter cut off his head and shoved the body aside. He did the same thing to the second and third giants.

In the castle everyone was asleep. The hunter made his way through the maze of corridors and halls, past all the splendour and riches of the rooms and chambers where people were sleeping, until he came to a steep staircase that led up to a tower, where the princess lay.

He gazed at her beautiful figure for a long time. Then he nudged her with his finger, whereupon she woke up. She grew pale and shrank back from the strange man, but when he began to explain who he was and how he had got there, the princess gradually became friendlier.

Eventually she sprang up and threw her arms around his neck, and she embraced him and kissed him and thanked him with a thousand loving caresses for releasing her from her enchantment and from the nasty giants. In her joy she offered him her hand in marriage and rewarded him with the ring from her finger. She wanted him to stay and rule the kingdom with her.

The hunter lingered in her arms for only a short time, but he promised to come

again after he had completed the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

When he returned to his family in the woods, they were still asleep beside the fire. They awoke with the sun and set off on their way again, barely speaking about the adventures of the night. And so they continued their long journey to the Holy Land.

After surviving many dangers and hardships, they returned to the same woods where they had spent the night, and they came upon a new inn with a sign that read: *No cost for the poor, but the rich must pay.*

The pilgrims were poor, so they went in and were treated generously. After a meal they went into the garden, which was beautiful and full of flowers and arbours, and here they met the innkeeper, a woman who was even more lovely than her blossom-filled garden.

The young hunter blushed mightily when he saw her, because she looked so much like his very own princess.

The innkeeper sat down with them and asked them who they were, where they had come from and whether they had had any trouble on their long journey.

So the oldest hunter told her about the skirmish with the bear, and when the others didn't believe him, he pulled the paw out of his bag and showed it to them. The second hunter did the same with the wolf's paw.

Whereupon the youngest hunter began to tell them about his adventure with the giants and the princess, and when they all laughed at him and called him a liar, he opened his vest and pulled out the ring bearing the royal seal. He had worn it on a string hanging close to his heart.

The innkeeper stood up, left and returned a short time later.

"I built this inn because of you," she told them. "I heard that you had passed this way, and I have been waiting here for your return. I wrote the sign knowing that it would draw you here. Because what this hunter has told you about the giants and the princess is true. I did not recognize him at first, but that is my ring. I am the princess, he is my husband, and now here comes my attendant carrying our little son."

The three hunters and their mother were brimming with happiness from that day on.

And if they have not died in the meantime, they are living there happily still.



Devil Red Beard



farmer's daughter, rich and beautiful, was so proud that she turned away every suitor. None of them was grand enough to satisfy her.

Except for one particular man, who managed to latch on to her. No one knew where he had come from, although he seemed to be quite proud of his background. But because he had a red beard and wore a bright green coat, the mean farm boys laughed at him and called him kingfisher bird.

The girl became tremendously upset when she heard this, and one night when her lover was asleep in her bed, she took her scissors and cut his beard off at the roots.

Whereupon flames flew out of his beard and burnt her face, so that it remained black for the rest of her life.

Meanwhile, her suitor leapt up with a howl and ran away.

For it was none other than the devil himself.



The Enchanted Crow



In a meadow sat a man on horseback, fast asleep. Along came a crow who pecked at the horse until it reared up and woke the rider.

“Why are you nipping at my steed?” cried the horseman.

“To wake you up,” said the crow. “Because you’ve been sleeping here for three years!”

The rider looked down and saw from his incredibly long beard that this was indeed the case.

“Tell me, how can I thank you?” he said.

“By giving me one of your three sisters,” said the crow. “Here, take them this picture of me.”

The horseman went home and showed his sisters the picture. The oldest wrinkled her nose. The second just cried, “No!”

But the youngest one blushed, took the picture and left the room.

Soon a magnificent carriage came, drawn by four horses. The sisters guessed that it was a prince and they ran to greet it. But when nothing but a black crow stepped out, the two elder sisters turned their backs, leaving just the youngest to receive the visitor.

Still, the crow invited all three to accompany him to his castle, and they rode forth through a deep wood, dark as the road to hell. But soon it grew light again, and they travelled through a lemon grove and came to a beautiful castle.

At this point the crow said to the two older sisters, “You must not under any circumstances poke your nose where it does not belong!” Then he took the youngest sister into another room.

But the two older ones crept after them and peeked through the keyhole, where they saw a handsome young man sitting at a table with their sister.

In that moment everything was transformed. All three sisters stood under a fir tree.

The crow screeched at them from the branches, “Only the youngest of you can still help me now. She must go to town dressed as a servant in rags, and take any job that is offered to her!”



So she went to the town in rags and was about to be taken away by the bailiff when a clerk came and asked whether she was willing to be a servant, and was she able to cook and clean? And he took her to serve his count.

It soon became apparent that she did not know how to do anything at all. The food was burnt, the silverware was even dirtier than before. The gardener, gamekeeper and houseboy sneered at her and showered her with insults and ridicule, making her weep bitter tears.

But the crow flew to her window, reached his wing towards her and said, "Pluck out one of my feathers, and whatever you write down with it will happen."

So the noon hour came and she wrote, *The finest of all dishes.*

And tableware appeared and she wrote, *Shine like new.*

That pleased the count and countess greatly, and she received the most magnificent clothes, which showed off her beautiful features.

It was the gardener who fell for her charms first. He now became very fond of the cook. He crept up to her door and peeked in. And when she did not rebuff him, he made his way right into her room.

"Close the door!" she said. When he turned around to do so, she quickly wrote, *I wish for him to have to open and close the door all night long.*

Thus it happened. And when morning dawned brightly, the gardener sneaked away in shame.

The next evening the gamekeeper came. The cook was already lying in bed. When he bent over to pull off his boots, she wrote, *I wish for him to pull his boots on and off all night long.* So he had to do this, too.

And in the morning light, he went away, furious.

On the third evening the houseboy came. His neck was bent at a peculiar angle from constantly looking after the pigeons. He was gazing lovingly into the girl's eyes when he realized that he had left the pigeon coop open, and he asked whether he could go to close it. She nodded, laughing, and wrote, *I wish for him to have to open and close the pigeon coop all night long.*

And that's how she dealt with her suitors.

But the suitors came up with an idea to enact their revenge. They cut three switches and lined up to whip her in turn. When the cook saw these, she wrote, *Let them whip themselves to pieces.*

And so it happened. Meanwhile, the count showed up, and he received the most lashings of all, and the countess too, and all their relatives throughout the land.

And now it was time! The crow came, this time as a prince, and he fetched the beautiful cook and took her home.

The Clever Bride



knight and his wife were very rich in worldly possessions, but they had only one child, a boy. When the son turned twelve, the father died, and the mother and the boy went to live in a castle that stood in the middle of a large lake. In their grief, they wanted to be cut off from the rest of the world.

As the boy grew up, he became wise and handsome, though he remained very pale and withdrawn. He loved being alone, and he chose for himself the most remote room in the castle—the one that had the most beautiful view of the lake. He would sit by the window and gaze longingly at the water.

When the son was twenty-four years old, his mother urged him to take a bride, because life had become too lonely for her. But he did not want to marry.

One night, after his mother had tried to persuade him in earnest, he leaned out of his open window, sadly watching the moonlight play sweetly on the water. He began to think about a bride, and imagined how he would like her to look.



Tired, he went to bed.

Suddenly, he noticed a light glowing at the window. He looked up, but he could not make out what it was.

As he was about to drift off, he felt a rustling of the bed curtains, and a female being with silken hair and wearing a sheer gown lay down by his side. By the faint glow of the moon, he could make out the pale figure of a beautiful woman lying next to him. She nestled up against him, and the night passed, full of tender passion and loving whispers.

In the morning, the ghost woman had disappeared. But before she left, she confided that she would come again, for she had often seen the young man looking out at the water in the moonlight. She would have come to him sooner, she said, if only he had left the window open.

From then on, a lovely creature came to his side every night, and the young man was beyond happy and in love, though he did begin to wonder whether it was always the same woman who came to his bed each night. So he kept asking her to show herself by day, because his mother was still pressuring him to take a bride. Even if she was poor, he said, he would marry her.



But she always answered, “My love, it cannot be. I cannot marry according to your custom. Let us just continue to be husband and wife as we have been doing so far.”

In the meantime, the mother, tired of her son dragging his feet, had herself found a bride for him. But the young woman she had chosen left him cold, and when he went to bed at night, he could hear the sighs of the spirit woman who lay beside him.

Still, his mother got busy and set a date for the wedding.

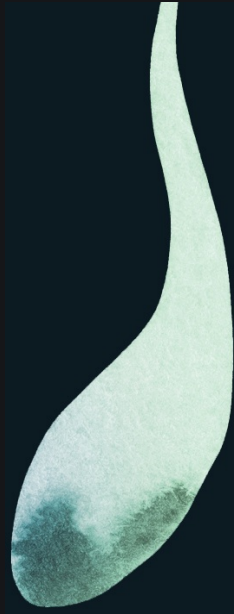
He came, of course.

On the first day, they danced through the night until dawn. On the second day, they feasted at a great banquet. And on the third day, the women brought the bride to the young man’s bedchamber.

The curtains of the bed rustled, and the bride shrank back in terror. She climbed into the bed first, though she had a strange feeling that it was already occupied.

Smiling at her nervousness, the bridegroom followed. But between them lay a water maiden. With her icy breath, she forced the bride to the edge of

the bed.



And so it went. Every evening the young man went to bed thinking he was holding his new bride in his arms. Instead, she was pining away out of grief, and when she died within the year, she was still a virgin.

Things continued this way for ten more women whom the mother found for her son. They all died within the year.

But the twelfth bride was clever, and she sought the advice of a witch. From her she learned that it was the water maidens who were responsible for the misfortune of the other brides, but that she could protect herself if, on the third day of the wedding celebrations, she did not accompany her husband to bed at the witching hour.

At midnight, the witch warned, he would feel as if he was being pulled by the hair to his bedchamber, but the bride should remain firm and not follow him, if she wanted to save them both.

Furthermore, she must remember to close the window that overlooked the water, and close it tightly, so that the spirits could not come in and the bridegroom could not be lured by the lamenting voices and be tempted to leap right into the water. The witch would protect them with a magic spell, and with herbs that the bride should throw under their marriage bed.

The young woman was also warned not to pull aside the bed curtains or climb into the bed before her husband.

Above all, she must keep all of this a secret. Otherwise, her husband was bound to give in to the power of the water maidens once more.

On the third day of the marriage celebrations, evening came, and finally it was midnight. The bridegroom grew increasingly restless and kept wanting to go to the bedchamber. But the bride held him back until the witching hour was well past.

When they reached the bedroom, he opened the bed curtains to the sound of twelve sighs. The bride said her magic spell and prayed with her husband, who had not thought about God for twelve years. Then they could hear wild singing and the roaring of the water. The water rose until the waves licked at the windows. But the night was won, and calm returned for good.

After a year passed, the wife gave birth to a boy, who brought great joy to everyone. But the witch had advised the mother not to let the child out of her sight for twelve days. During that time, she warned, their house would be in grave danger.

The child was christened on the thirteenth day. During the baptism, the sound of children's voices came from the corners of the room, saying, "I want that too, I want that too." But the assembled guests could see nothing.

Over time the wife gave birth to twelve children. But at each christening the same little voices could be heard.

When the twelfth child was finally christened, their mother gathered her courage and cried, "Show yourselves and tell us what you want!"

In that instant, twelve children came forth. They were as transparent as water, pale but very beautiful, with silken hair and bound feet.



The husband shrank back in fright, but the priest baptized them, and as soon as each one was baptized, the child fell down and was dead.

Before the twelfth child was christened, however, he spoke.

“We have a human father,” he said. “But our mothers are twelve water maidens, so we are neither human nor spirit. But now we have been released from the enchantment in which we were held. And because of the love of the water maidens for our father, they will be rewarded with three hundred years of beauty and youth!”



The Wolves



There was a rich count who had taken a beautiful bride. But the couple remained childless, and this brought the count great sorrow. As for the countess, she was consumed with jealousy whenever other women brought children into the world.

One day the two were travelling through a village, and before long they came across a festive procession heading towards the church. A farmer was having his triplets christened, and the entire community followed him in joyful celebration.

Enraged, the countess pushed herself into the middle of the procession. But the count mocked her. He said that she envied a lowly farmer who had what she could not possess, and that she had only herself to blame.

This infuriated the countess even more, and she accused the farmer's wife of being unfaithful, saying that a woman could not bring more than one child from one man into the world at a time.

When they returned home, the countess was still blistering with rage. So the count held a mirror up to his wife, so that she could see her own distorted features. And when the countess looked in the mirror, she saw with horror the head of a bearded wolf, its eyes red, its teeth bared.

In fact she was, without knowing it, already pregnant at that moment, and when it came time to deliver, she gave birth to seven boys in seven days. Each boy bore the mark of the bearded wolf, and she was reminded of her earlier words.

Because the count was away, she placed the seven babes in the care of the midwife, who tucked them in her apron and took them to a ravine where wolves lived.

But the count happened to be hunting there, and he ran into the old woman and asked what she was doing. She confessed to throwing seven young wolves

into a pit, and that these were his children. As a reward, he gave her his father's sword.

And he rescued the boys, to be raised by one of his servants.

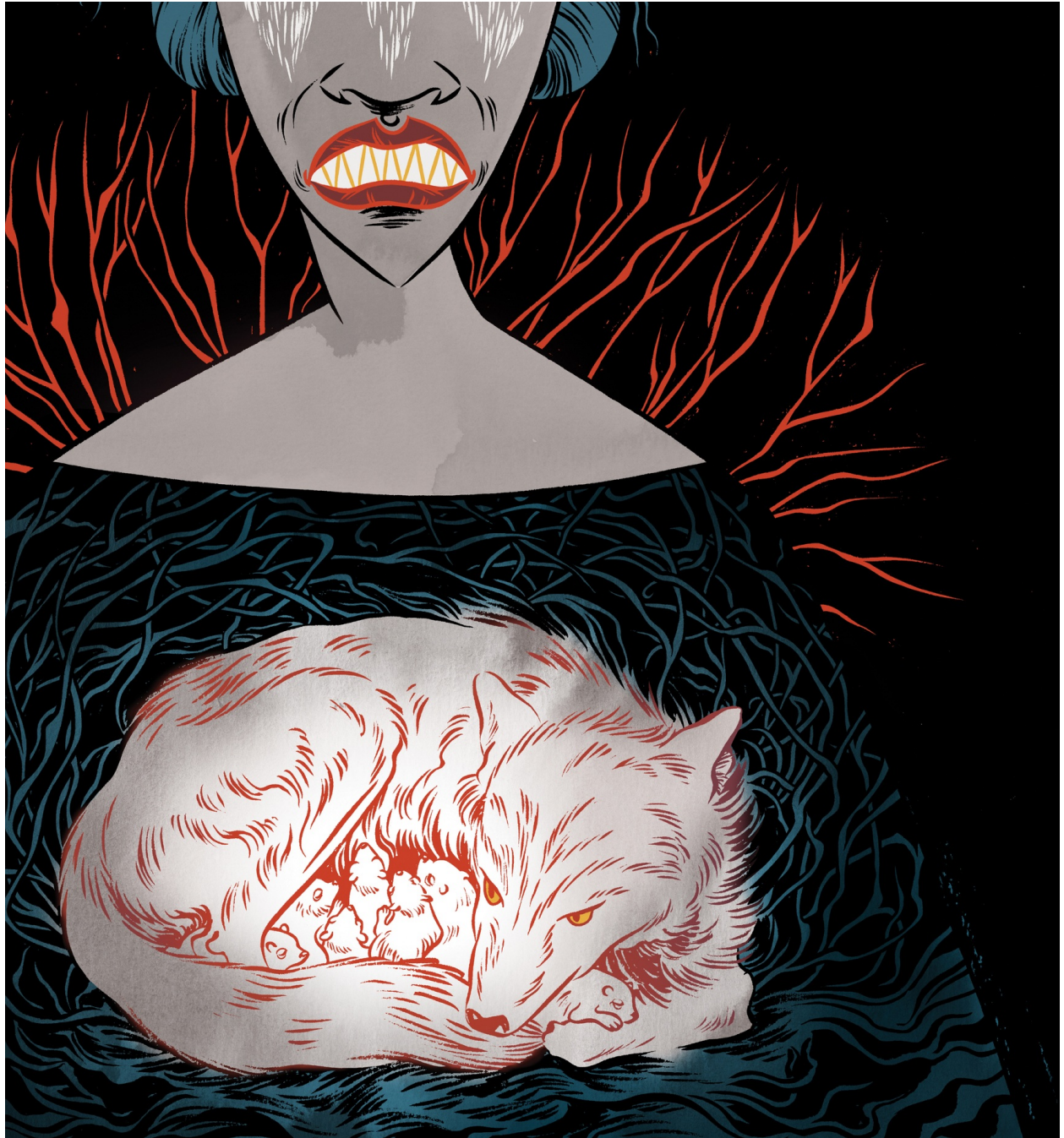
Eighteen years passed, and the count hosted a grand feast. Seven young men attended, and they all had long hair, and were both handsome and well-dressed.

When the countess saw them, she trembled, her heart heavy with foreboding.

During the meal, she smiled and asked the count what should happen to a mother who threw her own children to the wolves.

"She should be made to dance in burning hot shoes," came the answer.

So he condemned his wife to this very punishment. And at the same time, he proclaimed the seven boys to be his sons, and he called them the Wolves.



Come Along, Jodl



An old farmer had two sons, Michl and Jodl. The father loved Jodl best, because he was such a trusting lad, even though he was not as clever as his older brother.

But now the father wanted to retire, and to bequeath to his sons all his worldly goods, his house and his land.

But Michl did not want to hear about sharing. Because he was the oldest, he believed that the entire estate should go to him, despite the fact that the father would rather have left his fortune to Jodl, his favourite.

So the father set them a task. The son who brought him the most beautiful silk cloth would inherit everything.

Michl had confidence in his own cleverness, so he was satisfied with the agreement and immediately set off on his way. But Jodl, who had never been away from his father's house before, did not know where to begin, and he sat glumly on a bench in front of a dungheap.

As he sat there lost in thought, a toad came hopping out and asked why he was so sad. Jodl gazed at the toad in astonishment but did not want to answer. He saw nothing but a filthy, ignorant creature who was good for nothing.

But the toad insisted that it could definitely help Jodl with whatever he needed.

So Jodl said, "My father has promised his fortune to the one who can bring him the most beautiful silk cloth. But I don't know anything about how to get

such a thing, so my brother will surely be the one to inherit everything.”

“Come along, Jodl,” the toad said. “Follow me, and you will have the most beautiful cloth!”

But Jodl declined because he didn’t want to get his clothes dirty. Still the toad would not give up, and Jodl finally gave in and followed it into a nearby forest.

They came to a beautiful house. The door immediately opened and the toad hopped up the steps into a lovely large room, sat down on the sofa and cried, “Come, little mouse!”

Whereupon a little mouse ran in and asked helpfully, “What is your wish?”

“Bring the chest with beautiful silk cloth!”

The little mouse brought the chest, and the toad pulled out the most beautiful cloth and gave it to Jodl, who happily hurried home.

When he came to his house, Michl was already there with a very beautiful piece of cloth. But Jodl’s was even more beautiful.

Which meant Michl did not win the contest, so he demanded that his father set them a new task.

The father now demanded that each of them should turn the cloth into a new coat and bring it to him. Michl immediately set off on his way, but Jodl once again just sat on the bench in front of the dungheap.

Along came the toad, who again said, “Come along, Jodl, follow me!” And he received the most beautiful coat.

When Jodl brought the coat home, Michl became angry, and because all good things come in threes, he demanded a third task. Whereupon the father said that the son who brought home the most beautiful bride would receive all his property.

And once again Jodl sat there in front of the dungheap.

The toad was not long in coming, but again Jodl would not listen, for he was certain that this time the toad would not be able to help him.

But the toad did not give up. “Come along, Jodl!” it said.

This time, when they arrived at the house, the toad ordered Jodl to pay attention and to follow the instructions exactly. Jodl was to wash the toad, put it to bed and then lie down beside it. And he was to do so whether these tasks gave him pleasure or not.

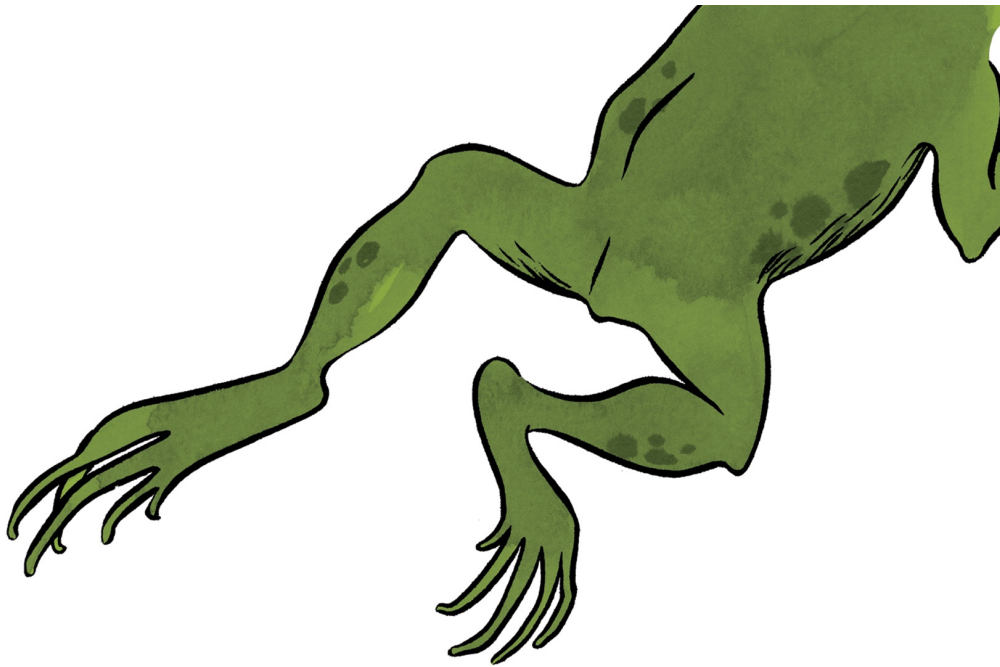
So he washed the toad, and they lay in bed together. Jodl shuddered at being

so close to such a hideous creature, but sleep soon overtook him, and his eyes closed.

When he awoke the next morning, there beside him lay the most beautiful maiden. He looked around the bedchamber, which had transformed into a splendid room. He looked out the window and saw that the dungheap had become a large castle overlooking a magnificent landscape.

He rang a bell and servants scurried in. The maiden sat up and thanked Jodl for releasing her from the spell she had been under. As thanks, she offered him her hand in marriage and all of her worldly possessions.

Jodl was so surprised that he did not know what to do. But the maiden reassured him, and so he accepted her offer with pleasure.



The little mouse was the lady-in-waiting.

Jodl took his bride to meet his father. Michl was very sad, because he had just come home with a pretty country girl. But his tears soon became tears of joy when Jodl explained that his brother could keep the house, because Jodl was plenty rich enough.

So the father was very pleased that his Jodl was so well looked after and that Michl was also satisfied, and he moved in with his beloved son and lived with him, happy and content.

And if they have not yet died, they are living so still, even today.

The Two Brothers



A king had two sons. They were both handsome, and so alike that people had trouble telling them apart. One day the older son decided to go on a trip. He said goodbye to his father and his brother, and because he loved his brother very much, he gave him a small bottle filled with water and said, “If the water in this bottle turns cloudy, it means I am ill. And if it turns red, it means I am dead.”

With that, he went away.

After a time he came to a royal city where a young princess ruled the land.

The king’s son was handsome and had fine manners, and he soon won the favour of the royal princess, who offered him her hand and her throne. He became the king of the land, and he was very happy indeed.

When autumn came, the two of them moved to their country residence on the edge of a forest.

One evening the king and his wife were lying by the window looking out over the beautiful landscape. On the other side of the forest they could see the sun glinting off the walls of a faraway castle. The king asked the queen what kind of castle it was. She told him it was enchanted, and that he must stay away from it, because anyone who went there never returned.

But this only piqued the curiosity of the king even more, and he paid little attention to his wife’s warning. He organized a hunt in the forest and set off with his servants and his faithful companions—a lion, a bear and a wolf. Before he left, the queen asked him not to approach the enchanted castle. She instructed the servants to make sure they did not let her husband out of their sight, and above all not to let him go near the castle.

But the young king was only enticed by the talk of danger, so after he had spent some time hunting in the forest and was unable to free himself from his

entourage, he came up with a plan. He pretended to be very tired and thirsty and allowed himself to be taken to an inn. He ordered wine, so fine and plentiful that his followers had their fill and quickly felt the effects of the strong drink. One after another they gradually grew quiet and finally fell into a deep sleep.

At this point the king set off and headed for the castle. A small bridge led over the moat to the door, where a little old woman stood with her hands hidden so that one could not see whether she had arms or not. She asked the king for alms, and he took pity on her and handed her a gold coin. Then she asked him to lay the money on the ground in front of her, since she had no hands. The good king bent down to lay the gold coin at her feet, whereupon the old woman whipped out a switch that she had been hiding beneath her cloak, and she beat him on the back and turned him into stone, along with the lion, bear and wolf.



In the meantime his retinue had awoken back at the inn, and they realized the king was missing. The servants searched all through the forest, and when they couldn't find him, they began to make their way back to the queen with trembling hearts.

Halfway home, however, they met the queen herself, who had come to find them as she was so anxious about the king. When she learned that he was not with them, she was desolate and cried day and night over her lost husband. She ordered the entire kingdom to search for him, but all was in vain. So she draped herself in mourning and was inconsolable as she thought only about her husband and his fate.

And so a year passed.

During this time it occurred to the younger brother to look at the vial of water. When he saw that it had turned a reddish colour, he was filled with worry, and he immediately set out to find his brother, certain that he had, at the very least, encountered some grave misfortune.

He trekked from kingdom to kingdom and from city to city. At last he came to the place where the grieving queen lived, and when he saw her youth and beauty, he fell madly in love with her. He made inquiries to find out why she was in

mourning, and when he learned what had happened, he decided that his own brother must be the lost husband of the beautiful queen.

Because he looked so much like his brother, he made a plan to win the queen for himself. He obtained clothes of the same cut and colour as those worn by the king, and one evening he went to the castle, where the servants recognized him as their master. They threw themselves at his feet with joy and kissed the hem of his cloak. And the queen, who happened to be looking down from the window, took but a single glance before running out to him. She fell into his arms, half fainting with joy and relief after the heavy suffering she had endured. Then she took him to her bedchamber and lovingly reproached him for staying away for an entire year without sending any word.

The new king, however, was very careful in his choice of words and avoided her questions as much as he could. And so the two of them lived happily together until autumn, when it came time to move to the royal residence at the edge of the forest.

The queen, of course, loved to spend relaxing evenings lying by the window with her husband, admiring the wonderful view and the colourful sky. And so the king asked her about the castle whose walls shone like red gold in the setting sun.

The queen was somewhat confused, because she had answered this very question some time ago. The king deemed it best not to continue with the conversation, though secretly he grew even more eager to find out what was going on at the castle.

And when he learned that this was an enchanted castle, and that whoever went into it never came out, he was even more curious to visit it. So, like his brother, he organized a big hunting expedition into the woods and set out with his followers, even as the queen begged them not to let him out of their sight. And, like his brother before him, he got them all drunk on wine.

After everyone lay buried in a deep sleep, he set off for the castle, his little dog by his side, his sword in hand, and walked over the bridge. At the door he saw a number of stone statues, and behind them an old woman who apparently had no arms.

She asked him for alms. In response he raised his sword and threatened to kill her if she did not tell him what had happened to his brother. She answered that she knew nothing about that and again asked him for money. But when he held out his hand to offer her something, she demanded that he place the coin on the

ground in front of her. He kept insisting on seeing her hands, even after she told him that they were too hideous to show.

At that point the old woman got mad, and she whipped out her switch and went to beat the king with it. But he was prepared for her tricks, and he swung his sword and cut off her arm. When her hand fell to the ground, he quickly leaned over and snatched up the switch.

Now he was even angrier, and he raised his sword to cut off her head, when she begged for mercy and confessed to everything. She also gave him a second switch that she had been holding in her other hand and said that if he touched the stone figures with it, they would come back to life and become the creatures they were before. And she pointed first to the statues of his brother with the three animals.

The king touched all the stone figures with the enchanted switch, including, finally, the animals and his brother, who stood before him full of astonishment. The brothers fell into each other's arms and received the thanks and congratulations of all those who had also been released. And the entire castle celebrated with great joy.

Though not for long.

Because when the enchanted king learned that the brother who had released him had been living with his wife the queen for so long, and that he had been deceived in such a scandalous way, he flew into an uncontrollable rage, pulled out his sword and plunged it into his brother's body.

The others were horrified, and they fled from the castle in terror. But the rescued king set off through the woods to find his wife. This didn't take long, as she had been so consumed with worry and alarm that she was making her own way through the very forest where her husband had gone astray for a second time.

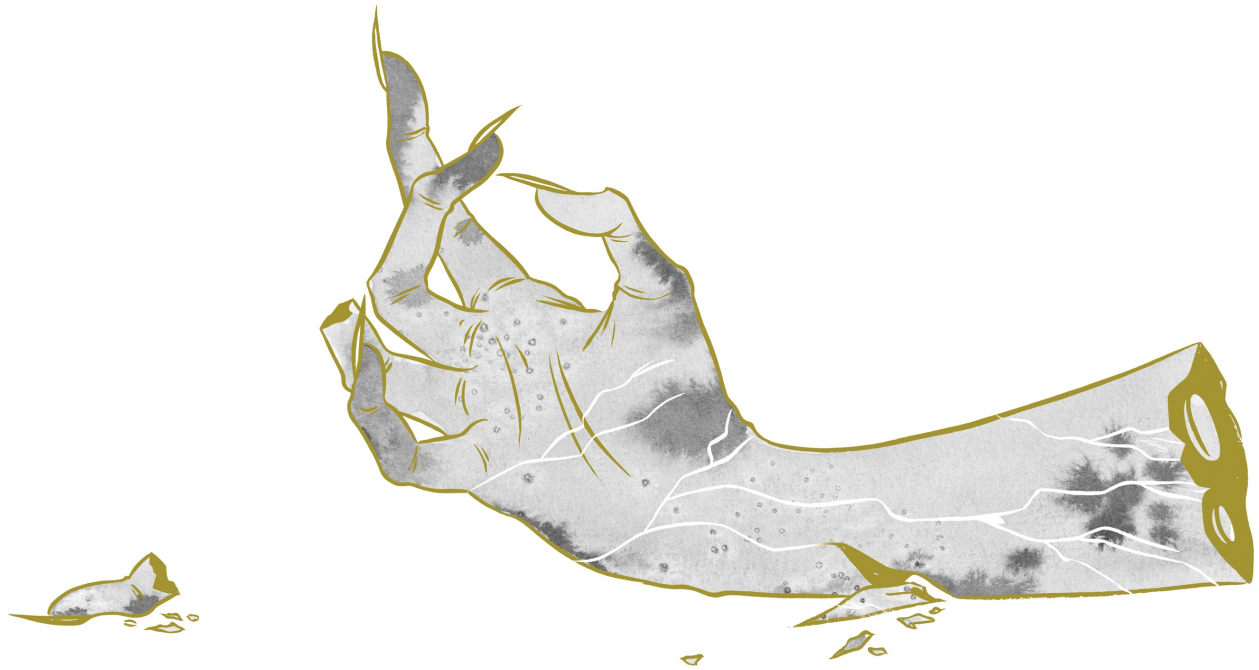
Their joy at finding each other was endless, although somewhat marred by the anguish of knowing that the younger brother had betrayed them and had come to such a violent end.

However, the queen recognized that his punishment, though harsh, was a just penalty for his treachery, and she tried to console herself with that thought.

As it turned out, the biggest consolation for both of them came with the news that the brother was not, in fact, dead but had survived and returned to his home country. It so happened that his little dog had never left his side and had licked his wound and stopped the bleeding. And they learned that he bore no hatred or

anger towards the brother who had wounded him, because he was convinced that the old woman had bewitched him and provoked him into committing the bloody deed.

So the couple lived long and happily, without any further misfortune. And eventually they left their kingdom in peace and tranquility, passing it down to their own splendid and prosperous children.



Countess on a Hedgehog

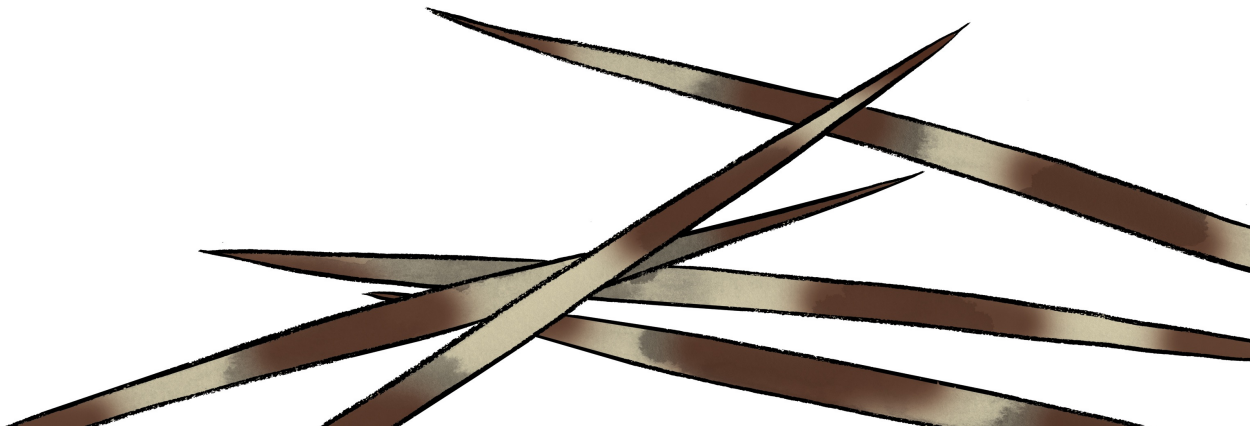
A rich count had a wife who was extremely meddlesome.
She tormented her husband, constantly pestering him to tell her his secrets.

Finally, one day he did so, just to silence her. But she was unable to keep the news to herself.

So, as punishment, he made her sit on a hedgehog. Someone painted a picture of her like that, and hung it up on the wall of a room.

And beneath the painting was this little rhyme:

*As penance for unwifely cheek
Here I sit, now mild and meek.*



The Knight and the Forest Maiden



he knight cast a handsome figure, but he was a man of loose morals who had a fierce temper. As long as he was around, no young woman in the surrounding area could be certain of her safety, and he pursued the forest maidens with rage and vengeance.

One day he went into the woods to torment these poor creatures as usual, but he lost his way.

He came to a large tree, and beneath it lay the most beautiful girl in the village, fast asleep. She was so lovely that the very sight of her lit a wild passion in him. He crept closer and seized the smiling girl in his arms.

Even though she was still deep in her dreams, he was just about to press his lips to her mouth when the shrill voice of the forest maiden called out from the underbrush:

Child so dear

Sin comes near

Be on guard

Take care, child dear

At which point the girl awoke from her sweet sleep. She had been dreaming that a handsome knight was standing before her to ask for her hand. Startled out of her dream, she fled, leaving the dismayed knight behind.

But the girl could not get the handsome knight out of her mind. She thought about him constantly, and the very next day she decided to go back to that golden spot in the woods where she could indulge in her wistful thoughts of him.

But no sooner had she set foot out of her little house than the forest maiden came dancing before her and singing:

*Wait, child, think
The rest of your life
Have patience, my child
And you'll be the knight's wife*

The forest maiden went on to warn the girl about her seducer, but vowed to help her if the girl made her a promise. Once she became the knight's wife, she must bake a ring-shaped cake for her once a week, as well as convincing her husband to stop tormenting the forest maidens.

So the girl agreed.

Meanwhile, the knight continued to go to the forest every day in hopes of finding the girl and fulfilling his evil intentions.



On one of his forays, the forest maiden stood on a tree branch and called to him to come closer. She said she knew what he was after and told him to stop his evil philandering. He would only possess the girl, she told him, if he was willing

to make of her an honest woman.

And so the knight was contrite, and he admitted that he was in the wrong, and he asked the forest maiden to seek the hand of his beloved on his behalf.

Later, as the wedding procession made its way to the chapel, the forest maiden showed herself one last time, and she reminded the bride of her promise.

For as long as she kept it, happiness would reign in the castle.



The Witch's Head



A farmer's wife was pregnant. One day an old neighbour woman came to visit—a woman who had the reputation of being a witch. She offered to be godmother to the child, for it was, she said, bound to be a girl.

The farmer's wife was afraid of the woman, and she dared not refuse.

When the wife did indeed give birth to a girl, she waited for the neighbour woman, who had promised to come herself when it was time for the christening. And she did come, as she had said. The child was baptized and a feast was held to celebrate the birth.

Afterwards, the godmother departed, saying they should meet again in six weeks' time.

When the time came, the farmer's wife went to visit the neighbour woman as expected. But as she reached up to ring the bell at the door, she found that the bell pull was actually a snake. When she climbed the steps, she saw a broom and a fireplace poker dancing together on the staircase.

Then she was standing at the door to the parlour, and she looked through the peephole...



...where she saw her child's godmother sitting with her own head in her lap, and she was picking lice out of her own hair.

The farmer's wife cried out in horror. When the godmother heard this, she quickly put her head back on and ran to meet her.

"How wonderful, daughter, that you have kept your word and come to visit me," she said. "Come in and sit down to eat."

And with these words she laid food on the table. She urged the farmer's wife again.

"Daughter, eat, drink, make yourself comfortable!" she said.

But the farmer's wife answered timidly, "No, thank you. I don't wish to eat, or to drink, and I am not comfortable."

"Why not?" asked the witch.

"First of all, because when I went to ring at the door, I found a snake in my hand."

"Oh, that was just my bell pull," said the witch.

"Second, I saw a broom and a fire poker dancing with each other on the stairs."

"And why not? That was my manservant and my maid. They are always carrying on with one another."

"And then, when I stood at the entrance to the parlour, I saw that you had taken off your head. You were picking lice out of your own hair."

At which point the witch stood up and screeched, "Eat, you pig! Or I will rip you in pieces!"

And then she did.



Source Notes

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3) The Moon and the Maiden

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4) Fishwomen “In einem Dorfe an einem grossen Wasser,” *Aus der Oberpfalz*, Vol. 2, 177–78.

5) Drink Up the Devil

“In der Gegend von Tiefenbach war eine Bäuerin,” *Aus der Oberpfalz: Sitten und Sagen*, Vol. 1, Augsburg: Matth. Rieger, 1857, 233.

6) The Flax Sowers

“Zwei junge Dirnlein, die eine schön, die andere hässlich, säten Lein,” *Aus der Oberpfalz*, Vol. 2, 369–70.

7) Ashfeathers

“Aschenflügel” (“Einem Mann war die Frau gestorben”), *Sagen und Märchen aus der Oberpfalz: Ein Leseheft*, Franz Xaver von Schönwerth, edited by Erika Eichenseer, Amberg: Franz Xaver von Schönwerth-Gesellschaft, 2010, 24–25, from “Einem Mann war die Frau gestorben,” Nachlass Schönwerth, No. 203 021.

8) The Weasel

“Das Wieserl,” in *Prinz Rosswiwl*, ed. Erika Eichenseer, 102, from “Ein Wieserl, weiss wie Schnee,” *Archiv für Volkskunde Marburg*, Zentralarchiv der deutschen Volkserzählung, Nachlass Schönwerth, No. 203 489.

9) The Gardener’s Son

“Wie der Gärtnersohn die schöne Prinzessin gewann,” *Prinz Rosswiwl*, 21–23, from “Es war einmal ein Gärtner bei einem König,” Nachlass Schönwerth, No. 202 993.

10) The Bad Mother

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11) The Bloody Paw

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12) The Hawk and the Dragon

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13) The Golden Slipper “Das goldene Pantoffel,” *Prinz Rosswiwl*, 52, from “Ein Holzhauer hat drei Töchter,” Nachlass Schönwerth, No. 202 100.

14) The Three Giants

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15) Devil Red Beard

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16) The Enchanted Crow

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17) The Clever Bride

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18) The Wolves

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19) Come Along, Jodl

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20) The Two Brothers

“Zwei Brüder,” *Prinz Rosswiwl*, 24–28, from “Ein König hatte zwei Söhne, die schön waren,” Nachlass Schönwerth, No. 203 019.

21) Countess on a Hedgehog

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22) The Knight and the Forest Maiden

“Es war ein Ritter schön von Gestalt,” *Aus der Oberpfalz*, Vol. 2, 375–76.

23) The Witch’s Head

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Franz Xaver von Schönwerth (b. 1810 in Amberg, Bavaria; d. 1886 in Munich, Germany), a civil servant and eventually the private secretary of King Maximilian II, began collecting the customs, traditions, legends, fairy tales and folklore of the people of the Upper Palatinate in Germany in the early 1850s. He published three volumes of tales, collected as *Aus der Oberpfalz: Sitten und Sagen* (From the Upper Palatinate: Customs and Legends), between 1857 and 1859. He was a German historian and folklorist and a contemporary of the Grimm brothers. Von Schönwerth was knighted in 1859 and served on the Board of the Historical Association of Oberbayern from 1868 to 1875. In 2009 hundreds of previously unpublished fairy tales collected by Von Schönwerth were discovered in an archive in Regensburg by curator Erika Eichenseer.

